

Majali welcomes Baker's statement

AMMAN (Pena) — Chief Jordanian negotiator to the Middle East peace talks Abdul Salam Al Majali Sunday welcomed statements by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker conditioning loan guarantees to Israel with a halt to settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories. Dr. Majali described the U.S. administration's position as articulated in Mr. Baker's statements as positive. "This position is a humanitarian gesture by the U.S. towards the Palestinians and the Arabs and a sign that the U.S. considers the Israeli settlement process as a violation of and aggression on Arab rights," he said. Dr. Majali said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency that the U.S. should not grant Israel any loan guarantees unless it gets a commitment from Israel to cease settlement activity in the occupied territories. He stressed the need for the U.S. to exercise more pressure on Israel not in this regard only, but also in other economic aspects of interest to Israel. Mr. Baker's statements, Dr. Majali said, reflects positively on the peace negotiations, particularly those which will convene soon in Washington, and shows that the U.S. is serious in supporting the process. He called on the U.S. to emphasize its stand by deeds in a way that could bring to an end settlement activity in the occupied lands. (See story below).

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرائي

Abu Jaber to coordinate with Syrians

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber is going to Damascus later this week for talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al Sharaa on the ongoing Middle East peace negotiations. In a statement to the Jordan Times, the minister said that the talks were within the framework of consultations and coordination between the two countries on new developments in the peace process. He said that he will be looking into the Syrian vision on how Jordan and Syria can coordinate their positions in the coming stage. Dr. Abu Jaber said he had met with Mr. Sharaa in Larnaca twice during the Non-Aligned Movement's foreign ministers' meeting to discuss the coordination issues. He said that his discussions will cover the bilateral talks which are scheduled for Feb. 24 in Washington and the outcome of the multilateral talks held in Moscow on Jan. 28 and 29.

Volume 17 Number 4927

AMMAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1992, SHA'BAN 6, 1412

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Egypt says alleged Israeli spy confessed

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's interior minister said on Sunday an Israeli arrested last week with his daughter had confessed he worked for Israel's intelligence service. "The Israeli confessed before prosecutors. He did not deny," Mohamed Abdul Halim Musa told reporters. Asked whether Fares Subhi Masrati, 41, admitted he was spying for the Israeli Mossad intelligence service, the minister said: "Yes, he acted on behalf of the Mossad."

2 Israelis wounded

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Three Israelis were hurt by bomb explosions in the occupied Gaza Strip and an Israeli man was lightly wounded when stabbed in the occupied West Bank, security sources said on Sunday. They said a 22-year-old woman was seriously wounded when two pipe bombs exploded in a tomato packing plant in the Netzarim Jewish settlement in Gaza. Israel radio said she might lose a leg. She was flown to hospital in Israel. Five hours later two soldiers in a force searching Netzarim were wounded, one moderately and the second lightly, when a second charge exploded, the sources said.

Israel compensates Italian activist

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli police said on Sunday they had paid nearly \$120,000 in compensation to an Italian woman who lost an eye when security forces broke up a peace demonstration two years ago. A police spokeswoman said the money was paid to Maria Manno's lawyer last week. Ms. Manno lost her eye when water cannon shattered the window of her east Jerusalem hotel room window.

Syria to sign nuclear safeguards agreement

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al Sharaa said on Sunday his country would sign an agreement of safeguards against diversion of nuclear technology to military uses. The Syrian news agency SANA quoted Mr. Sharaa as telling Hans Blix, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Syria would sign the agreement "as part of its policy to make the Middle East an area free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons." SANA quoted Mr. Blix as saying the agreement was "an important step towards achieving the comprehensive safeguards in the Middle East and the world."

Lebanon: No peace breakthrough before June

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said on Sunday there could be no breakthrough in Middle East peace talks before Israeli elections scheduled in June. "I don't expect decisive decisions (in the peace talks) during the next four months that separate us from the Israeli elections," Mr. Bouez told the official national press agency. "We can be sure that a final peace decision is impossible during this stage, but ... a certain progress in the negotiations is possible," Mr. Bouez said.

Iraq calls for 1.5 million bpd oil cut

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi Oil Minister Usama al Hiti warned on Sunday against a possible collapse of oil prices and called for 1.5 million barrel per day cut of OPEC production. "The only solution to prevent the collapse of prices during the second half of this year is an immediate reduction of about 1.5 million bpd," Mr. Hiti told the Iraqi news agency before leaving for Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries talks in Switzerland. He said current total OPEC production exceeded 24.1 million bpd despite the halt of Iraq's exports because of the U.N.'s Gulf war sanctions.

Blizzards bring death, chaos to Middle East

Storm continues today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

NICOSIA (R) — Blizzards howled across parts of the Middle East on Sunday, bringing more death and chaos in the harshest winter to grip the region for two decades. A cold front swirling across the Eastern Mediterranean dumped fresh snow on Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. Another killer snowslide hit Turkey where temperatures slumped as low as minus 30 Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit).

Three people froze to death and two went missing in northern Lebanon as snowstorms swept the country for the sixth day running, civil defence sources said. Dozens of villages and towns in the Bekaa region and mountains to the north and east of Beirut were cut off.

In Turkey, an avalanche killed a villager on the outskirts of the Black Sea town of Giresun, bringing to 218 the death toll from snowslides in the country since last weekend.

Officials said more than 6,000 villages and townships, mainly on the eastern Anatolian plateau and in the avalanche-hit southeast, were cut off by snow up to three metres deep. Weathermen predicted more snow over Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean over the next few days.

The worst blizzards for 20 years hit Syria's northern and central provinces where all roads were blocked by snow up to three metres deep. No casualties were reported.

Temperatures dipped below freezing during the day in Damas-

cus where streets were covered by 15 cm of snow. State radio said the capital's airport was closed. Snow and rain fell for the third time this year in Israel. The upper Galilee and the occupied Golan Heights in the north were virtually paralysed, Israel Radio said.

Farmers in the usually drought-hit north watched their fields turned into lakes. They said torrential rain had wiped out 10 years of cultivation and appealed to the government to declare an emergency.

In Jordan gales, snow and driving rain shut schools and offices in Amman for the second time in a week. Storms played havoc with telephones and electricity supplies (see story on the right).

Some areas had received as much as 20 cm of snow and 17 cm of rain over the last 24 hours, Amman's weather office said.

Sun-seeking tourists from Finland flew into the Red Sea resort of Aqaba to be met by rain and near-freezing temperatures.

The severe weather looked like ending a regional drought.

Officials on the holiday island of Cyprus, jubilant after the wettest December since 1911, said more heavy snow had fallen on the Troodos Mountains.

Reservoirs — nearly empty three months ago — were already more than one-third full. But farmers reported severe frost damage to the potato crop, the island's biggest agricultural export.

Israel Radio said rabbies who declared the downpour the answer to their prayers would now pray for it to stop.

AMMAN — More snow fell on Jordan Valley blocking roads and forcing schools, community colleges and universities as well as private and public organisations to close.

The Meteorology Department said in an announcement at noon Sunday that Jordan was affected by a deep low depression centered southeast of Cyprus causing thunderstorms, heavy rains and snow over highlands above 500 metres.

The department warned people living in low-lying regions to seek higher grounds in view of the expected floods, noting that the storm was continuing Monday but gradually receding. It said that the weather will slightly improve by Tuesday when it becomes partly cloudy.

Police warned of landslides along the roads leading to the Jordan Valley where more than 7,000 acres of agricultural land were reported to have been flooded by rain water.

The Public Security Department reported that most of the roads in the Jerash and Ajloun areas in the north as well as those in the Tafleh and Shobak districts in the south were closed due to snow.

The Ministry of Education Sunday noon announced the closure of all schools within the Amman region Monday, and



Except for four-wheel drive vehicles, traffic came to a standstill Sunday as more snow settled on the ground and trees (more photos by Youssef Al 'Allan on page 3)

heads of community colleges and universities also followed suit. The police warned of slippery roads and flooded streets which they said made movement on the roads hazardous.

The general weather conditions were reviewed by the Council of Ministers at a regular session Saturday evening.

A statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, discussed the conditions in the Kingdom in the wake of the series of snowstorms and reviewed reports about damages to the farmlands and damage caused to the roads, and livestock.

Petra said that Sharif Zeid instructed the concerned ministers to follow up various questions related to repair of damage to the country's infrastructure.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar submitted a report on the current water situation in the Kingdom and future plans.

Baker: 'Significant issues' divide U.S., Israeli talks

Olmert: U.S. approves new Jewish settlements

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A senior cabinet minister asserted Sunday that the United States bowed to Israel's wishes to expand Jewish settlements during discussions on Israel's request for U.S. loan guarantees.

The remark by Health Minister Ehud Olmert conflicted with Washington reports that Israel has agreed to curtail settlement building in the occupied territories to obtain the \$10 billion in loan guarantees.

But Mr. Olmert's comments reflected what is apparently Israel's double-edged strategy of signalling enough flexibility to get the guarantees while cutting back as little as possible on settlement building.

The loans to help absorb a wave of Soviet Jewish immigrants have been linked to the settlements because Washington views the Jewish enclaves on occupied land as an obstacle to peace with the Arabs.

Mr. Olmert, summing up a Washington meeting Friday between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval, said that Israel had not been asked to halt settlements.

"As long as Israel has not been asked for a commitment to freeze settlements, all the rest is open to negotiation," he said. However, Israeli sources quoted in Washington said Israel expressed willingness to at least curtail building during the Friday session.

The United States has offered a compromise allowing Israel to complete housing units already started in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in exchange for a freeze on future building.

Some reports say U.S. and Israeli officials differ about the number of housing starts, with Americans estimating it at 9,000 and Israelis saying 12,000-14,000 units are under way.

Israeli newspaper editorials said Washington had made its demand for a freeze clear and that Israeli right-wing leaders were only flogging the issue to appeal to settlers before June 23 national elections.

The Yedioth Ahronoth daily described Mr. Baker's message this way: "You want guarantees? Stop the settlements. This is



James Baker

the bitter truth."

Israel has asked for the money in annual instalments of \$2 billion. It would be in addition to the \$3 billion in U.S. military and civilian assistance Israel already receives yearly.

Bank officials have predicted economic disaster for Israel if it doesn't obtain the funds needed to absorb a wave of 350,000 immigrants since 1989 from the former Soviet republics.

The U.S. stand on the settlements is in line with its policy that Israel should agree to withdraw from the lands occupied in the 1967 Middle East war in exchange for peace with the Palestinians and Arabs.

Mr. Shoval told reporters on Friday that Israel did not think settlements ought to be linked to what Israel views as its request for purely humanitarian aid.

Mr. Baker said the United States took the view that funding above its normal annual aid package should only be provided on terms consistent with U.S. policy goals.

Significant divide

In Washington Secretary Baker said Saturday that "significant issues" divide the United States and Israel in discussions aimed at reaching an agreement the loan guarantees.

"We've agreed on a few things. There are still some rather significant issues that are in disagreement," Mr. Baker said on the Cable News Network.

Police close FIS HQ; more measures expected

ALGIERS, Algeria (Agencies) — Police raided the headquarters of the Muslim fundamentalist opposition Sunday, and the head of the army-backed ruling council briefed political leaders on imminent new steps to halt worsening street battles.

The council's president, Mohammad Boudiaf, refused to specify whether the measures would, as speculated by the press, include a state of emergency. The state radio, citing hospital officials, said 30 people had been killed and more than 200 wounded since Friday in clashes between fundamentalists and security forces.

At least a dozen people were killed earlier in the week, in the eastern city of Batna, but there was no overall official toll of deaths and injuries.

The latest deaths included two children in the western town of Relizane, according to the state-run APS news agency. It said an infant died from tear gas inhalation, and a 9-year-old child was killed by a stray bullet.

In the eastern city of Constantine, hundreds of fundamentalists marched through downtown Sunday, chanting that they were ready to die for the Islamic Salvation Front. The party has been the target of a four-week crackdown since authorities cancelled parliamentary elections that it was virtually certain to win.

Political leaders emerging from the briefing in Algiers told state radio that Mr. Boudiaf said new security measures already had been approved by the five-man high state committee and would be made public soon. They said Mr. Boudiaf did not give details and did not ask the seven leaders of non-fundamentalist parties if they approved.

Mr. Boudiaf "told us there will be measures which will not be detrimental to democracy or free political expression," said Nour-reddine Boukrouh, head of the Party for Renewal.

There was press speculation that the ruling council would impose a state of emergency or ban the Salvation Front.

In Algiers, security forces were seen Sunday moving into the Salvation Front's main office, arresting at least six people, and then closing the building. The imam of a neighbouring, pro-fundamentalist mosque also was arrested, witnesses said.

In another sign of deepening crisis, the national soccer federation indefinitely postponed all

pro marches because of security concerns.

Street battles raged in several Algerian cities Friday as security forces tried to enforce curbs on political activity linked to weekly prayers at mosques. Violence continued Saturday in Algiers and elsewhere.

In the capital, fundamentalists erected barricades of tires, cement and stone and set fires in several neighbourhoods. Security forces responded with tear gas and bullets.

Scores of people were arrested, according to various sources, but no figures were available.

The military-backed government took power a month ago after cancelling the second round of parliamentary elections. The Salvation Front overwhelmingly won the first round.

The front, in a communique distributed Sunday, said the crisis would continue as long as "the junta in power" repressed its adversaries.

The communique was signed by the front's national information director, Abderrazak Radjam, who has been sought by police since Friday.

Israeli high court begins hearings on expulsion orders

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's supreme court on Sunday began hearing the appeals of seven Palestinians ordered deported by the army from the occupied Gaza Strip.

Defence attorneys told the three-judge panel in an open hearing that they could not mount a proper defence because most evidence was kept secret.

Prosecutors insisted that secrecy was necessary to protect informers and later disclosed some of the evidence to the judges in a closed session.

The outcome of the hearings could affect the U.S.-backed Middle East peace talks.

Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, a Gaza city physician who heads the Palestinian delegation to the talks, came to watch the deliberations.

He said if the Palestinians are expelled, it will be "a negative influence on the peace process" but predicted the talks would continue.

Israel's supreme court has never overturned an expulsion order. After Israel issued deportation orders for 12 Palestinians on

Jan. 2, the Palestinian delegation and Arab states delayed the start of the second round of Middle East peace talks in Washington. The next round is expected to begin on Feb. 24.

Four other Palestinians, all from the occupied West Bank, also are expected to appeal their expulsion orders to the supreme court. Earlier, a military appeals board dropped the case against the fifth West Bank resident.

Israel has expelled 67 Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip since the start of the four-year Arab uprising against Israeli rule.

Human rights groups have argued that expulsions violate international conventions and often are conducted without due process.

The latest batch of deportation orders came during a series of fatal attacks on Jewish settlers in the occupied territories. Four Israelis have died in the attacks since October.

None of those ordered deported has been charged in connection with the attacks. They are accused of fomenting anti-Israeli activities.

Defence Attorney Avigdor Feldman appealed to the court to reveal at least part of the secret evidence. He also urged that a special lawyer be appointed to examine the evidence, then report to defence lawyers and the court.

Freih Abu Nadein, a lawyer for the Palestinians who was a member of the Palestinian delegation to Madrid, Spain, told reporters: "There is a chance to repeal the expulsions if the international community will put pressure on Israel."

He added that a compromise might be reached before the next round of peace talks whereby the Palestinians would be expelled for a short period of time, rather than for life as is the current practice.

Israel's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, has proposed limiting deportations to a period of 18 months.

Also Sunday, shops and offices in the West Bank and Gaza were closed in a general strike to mark the start of the 51st month of the uprising.

Palestinian activist goes back to jail

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

Ahmad Fadel Tahboub put the photos of his wife and two young children in his shoulder bag along with underwear and his shaving kit. At age 48, the Palestinian activist went back to prison Sunday.

A leader in the PLO's Popular Struggle Front, Mr. Tahboub has already served 18 years in jail for anti-Israeli activities. His walk into the Russian compound, Jerusalem's main jail, was the start of eight more months behind bars.

"Eight months is not my whole life," Mr. Tahboub reasoned before his wife, 4-year-old son Haitham and daughter Mai, 3, joined him on the ride to jail from his Jerusalem home on a windy, snowy morning.

These days, Mr. Tahboub hardly looks the radical once sentenced to life imprisonment as a bomb thrower. His hair

and thick moustache are salt-and-pepper coloured. He has a bald spot in the back of his head.

When friends gathered to say goodbye, one companion drew loud laughter when he told Mr. Tahboub, using his nickname, "run into the mountains, Abu Haitham." It seemed silly that the middle-aged Tahboub would go into hiding as do young Palestinians.

This time, Mr. Tahboub says, his crime was instructing members of his tiny PLO faction to write anti-Israeli slogans on walls. He pleaded guilty after spending 10 months in jail and five months under house arrest waiting for trial.

The military court charges say Mr. Tahboub was guilty of "providing services" to an illegal organisation — the Syrian-backed Struggle Front, outlawed by Israel along with its parent Palestine Liberation Organisation.

A military official said Mr. Tahboub headed the front in

Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, recruited members, ordered leaflets distributed and met with other PLO leaders to organise the four-year Palestinian uprising.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, had not details of Mr. Tahboub's background but noted he was "freed in the Jebel deal," a sign that he was a serious offender.

Indeed, Mr. Tahboub was released in the 1985 exchange of Israeli POWs for Palestinian prisoners arranged through Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

Mr. Tahboub said his crime, for which he was sentenced to life in 1969, was throwing a bomb at an office that arranged the sale of Arab properties to Jews. He maintained no one was hurt and said he had no regrets.

"I am a national struggler," he declared. "I consider these actions legal."

Mr. Tahboub also was jailed

one year without charge. In prison, he learned Hebrew and English and works as a translator for Arabic newspapers. He wants to keep fighting Israel's occupation, but now sees his task more as politics, Mr. Tahboub said.

One of his regrets in going back to jail is that he will miss any role in U.S.-sponsored peace talks, which his front supports. He had hoped that, although the PLO has been barred from the negotiations, he could serve as an observer.

"I want to use my political abilities in serving our cause," he said.

But Mr. Tahboub put aside politics before going back to jail. He looked fondly at his wife, Nabila, 32, and showed off pictures of his children romping in the snow outside his home in Arab East Jerusalem.

"To live in prison is much, much worse than under house arrest with my family around," he said with a sigh.

Iraq facelifting its border post in preparation for easing sanctions

TREIBIL, Iraq (R) — Iraq is giving its main customs post a facelift for the day when sanctions are lifted and trade, now restricted to a trickle of essentials, turns into a flood of free market commerce.

"We are building everything new, new customs shed, places for immigration, everything," said a customs official at Treibil, a desolate and windswept gateway on Iraq's border with Jordan.

The construction, started in recent weeks, is evidence of Baghdad's belief that sanctions imposed for its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait will eventually be lifted, despite vocal opposition by the United States and its allies.

It is also an attempt to boost morale of officials posted to this wilderness and follows the raising of salaries last year to fight corruption, Iraqis say.

Last week the United Nations Security Council decided to maintain the trade embargo, a measure that bans Iraq from exporting lifeblood oil and prevents it from importing anything except essential food and drugs.

No-one in Treibil appeared to have heard the news from U.N. headquarters in New York.

Workers have completed several blocks of small offices and are ringing the frontier post with a new concrete wall and an imposing entrance of two huge tear-shaped Arabic arches.

Treibil, a collection of portable cabins, ramshackle offices and one two-storey administration building, is roughly midway on the 1,000 kilometre road between the Jordanian capital, Amman, and Baghdad.

It is the only legal way of entering Iraq since sanctions closed Iraqi airspace and made Baghdad the only modern capital in the world that cannot be reached by air.

All legal trade — the porous borders with Turkey and Iran have been a smuggler's delight for centuries — must pass through Treibil as well as Iraqis and foreigners going to and from the country in private cars and taxis.

But most traffic consists of Iraqi or Jordanian lorries ferrying food and drugs.

Much is imported privately by Iraqis with access to foreign exchange that the government says it cannot find because its overseas assets are frozen pending war

reparation claims.

The 12-15 hour taxi drive from Amman reinforces the visitor's impression that he is entering a country cut off from the rest of the world.

There are no passenger lounges, tannoy announcements or duty free shops usually associated with international travel.

Instead there is a bumpy single-lane highway from Jordan to Treibil, a bewildering series of immigration and currency checks carried out in the open air on stone slabs, a dingy cafeteria serving snacks, a bank, toilets that would give hygienists nightmares and a petrol station.

Then there is the super-smooth three-lane highway from Treibil to Baghdad. It is a Brazilian-built triumph of tarmac technology, now completely repaired from Gulf war bomb damage.

The last piece of war damage is a wrecked bridge over the Euphrates near Ramadi, about an hour from the capital, but that too is close to being mended.

"Soon, you will see," replied a wind-blown worker when asked by a visitor when it would be finished.

What's on Jerusalem's mind?

By Marcus Eliason

The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — "Danger: Lewd pictures corrupt youth's soul," declares a poster put up by ultra-religious Jews fighting to curb displays of flesh. A woman's bare back is displayed alluringly from a movie ad nearby.

The two messages are pasted on one of the city's public notice boards, which offer an insight into what's on Jerusalem's mind. They carry advice on everything from how to get a Christmas tree to preparing for a bar mitzvah.

The 290 large rectangular billboards scattered around the city's Jewish sector are an old and much-used means of communication. They carry death notices, movie ads, concert dates, political announcements, municipal slogans, invitations to religious festivals.

They also reflect the religious, political and ethnic mosaic that makes up the holy city.

One poster advertises a Yiddish-language show called "together is better." Yiddish was dying out in Israel until immigrants began pouring in from the former Soviet Union. Many of them speak Yiddish, and many are settling in Jerusalem.

"The Zionist-religious public" is urged to settle in Shuafat range, a Jewish housing complex being built on the Arab side of the city. International criticism has not slowed Israel's drive to populate Arab east Jerusalem with Jews.

Jerusalem's poster culture is confined to the Jewish parts of town. The Arab public prefers to send its messages through its newspapers or political slogans on walls.

After 25 years united under Israeli rule, the two halves of Jerusalem still have difficulty communicating. Thus a poster put up by the Jewish-run municipality invites the public to a lecture by Moshe Ben Haim, a Jewish scholar of Arab Affairs, titled: "How to talk to the Arabs."

The municipality charges a fee based on the size of a poster and checks the notices to make sure they do not violate obscenity laws. One recent reject was a movie ad showing a woman with a man's hand on her thigh.

Iraq accuses U.N. inspectors of violating diplomatic immunity; U.N. official says incident resolved

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Iraq accused nuclear inspectors of violating diplomatic immunity by entering the headquarters of an Arab scientific council in Baghdad, but a U.N. official said Sunday the incident was resolved amicably.

"There was a standoff for a number of hours," said Alastair Livingston. "It was not an awkward one this time, and the issue was basically resolved amicably to the success of the two sides."

Mr. Livingston is regional representative of the Bahrain-based U.N. special commission charged with destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The state-run Iraqi news agency said the inspectors entered the offices of the federation of Arab scientific research councils on Friday.

It said the incident was "another proof of the inspections teams' violations of Security Council resolutions, and a deliberate attempt to harm Iraq."

According to Mr. Livingston, the incident did occur Friday, the Muslim holiday when everything

was shut down. The team was told, "no, you can't come in. It doesn't belong to us," he said.

A discussion ensued and the U.N. inspectors did go in. Mr. Livingston said there was no violence and as far as he knew, the inspectors were not after any documents.

"The team only wanted to view the facility anyway," he said. Reference books say the 15-nation council was established in 1976 to encourage Arab cooperation in scientific research. It also publishes two periodicals.

UNA said the council has diplomatic immunity.

But Mr. Livingston said this was a "negotiable issue" because signatory states must abide by the U.N. Charter — under which the inspectors were given authority to inspect Iraqi facilities — and this could take precedence over "other individual treaty obligations by a state."

The 36-member team of nuclear inspectors is led by Italian Maurizio Zifferero of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency. It flew to Bag-

dad on Wednesday.

Iraq repeatedly has been accused of not cooperating with U.N. inspectors.

Last summer, a nuclear team led by American David Kay was detained in parking lot for about five days when the Iraqis tried to recover seized documents on the Iraqi nuclear programme.

The Iraqis eventually gave in. The experts were allowed to leave, taking with them case loads of documents they said detailed Iraq's secret nuclear programme.

Late last month, a group of U.N. chemical-weapons inspectors was jostled by a hostile crowd during a government-staged demonstration in Baghdad.

"It is clear that the team was after fabricating a row similar to that of David Kay," the Iraqi news agency said of the latest incident.

"Despite the fact that the Iraqi side gave confirmations to the team on the legal and diplomatic status of the federation, team members insisted on inspecting the premises."

The agency did not say whether the inspectors removed materials from the building or questioned employees.

The 36-member team of nuclear inspectors flew to Baghdad on Wednesday from Bahrain, regional headquarters of a U.N. commission charged with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

On the same day, a chemical inspectors' team had returned from a trip to Iraq and its leader, Hans Dieter Jopp, said the Iraqi government was still trying to conceal information.

Jopp, a German, said his team was "not 100 per cent satisfied" with the degree of cooperation demonstrated by the Iraqis. He said experts still want more information on Iraq's bombs, missiles and munitions. During the trip, team members were jostled by an angry Iraqi crowd outside their residence in Baghdad.

Separately, the United Nations said Friday that Iraq may still have Scud missiles, despite international requirements that it destroy the weapons.

Sudan's number two in Egypt to patch up ties

CAIRO (R) — Sudan's second most powerful man flew to Egypt on Sunday to try to ease friction with a Cairo government deeply suspicious of Muslim fundamentalist influence in Khartoum.

Officials from both sides said they hoped the visit, the highest-level contact between Sudan and Egypt for 18 months, could help to restore the traditional intimacy between the two neighbours.

But in the last few days, a row over a Sudanese oil concession has reopened a 35-year-old border dispute and lengthened the list of issues which divide them.

Major-General Al Zubeir Mohammed Saleh, deputy chairman of Sudan's ruling Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), arrived in Cairo on a small private plane and was met by Yousef Wali, Egypt's deputy prime minister.

Gen. Saleh is due to meet

President Hosni Mubarak.

The border dispute flared into the open when Egypt said Sudan had been wrong to give Canada's International Petroleum Corporation rights to look for oil in the Halaib triangle, an area administered by Khartoum since 1956 but claimed by Cairo.

Zubeir dodged a question about Halaib when he spoke to reporters at the airport, saying the Sudanese and Egyptian peoples were closely intertwined and adding: "All (outstanding issues) will find suitable solutions."

Sudan's top civil servant for foreign affairs, Mohammad Osman, who accompanied Zubeir, was more forthright last week in Khartoum. He issued a statement that Sudan had "undisputable rights" in the area.

Egypt's oil minister, Hamdi Ali El Banbi, told Reuters on Thursday Cairo had blocked out Halaib for oil exploration last year and

was pursuing plans to offer it for tender.

Halaib is simply the latest cause of friction between Egypt and its one-time protectorate to the south, which is racked by food shortages and civil war.

"Of course we want better ties, but we have to see some sign of change from their end," an Egyptian diplomat said privately.

Egypt backed Sudan's military regime when it came to power in July 1989 but now accuses it of training Muslim extremists and is suspicious of its newly blossoming friendship with Israel.

A state-controlled weekly political review, Rose El Yousef, chose Sunday to run a cover story on Sudanese training camps for Muslim guerrillas. It linked them to fundamentalist leader Hassan Toubabi, who diplomats believe runs Sudan from behind the scenes.

Palestinians await Kuwait's deadline

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's remaining Palestinians are making a last-ditch attempt to stay in the northern Gulf emirate but most fear a new security crackdown after a residency permit deadline expires next Saturday.

Diplomats say Kuwait's Palestinian community has dwindled to between 30,000 and 40,000 — less than a tenth of its size prior to Iraq's Aug. 2, 1990 invasion.

Kuwait has set a Feb. 15 target for all foreigners to begin processing their residence permits. The final deadline has been extended by five months to the end of May but what will happen in between is not clear.

Officials say no punitive action will be taken prior to June 1, but warn that non-Kuwaitis without application receipts may be questioned at checkpoints after Feb. 15.

"We don't know what is going to happen, we are just waiting to see how the situation develops,"

said a 45-year-old Palestinian storekeeper who asked not to be identified.

"But we're afraid of another crackdown after the 15th. We're living on our nerves, we're afraid to go out at night."

Kuwait said it intends to make its estimated 600,000 nationals a majority in their own country. The government does not want the population level to rise much above its present level of 1.5 million — half its pre-crisis total.

Arabs of nationalities viewed by Kuwait as a security threat — Jordanian, Yemeni, Sudanese and Palestinian — have sent passports home to remove the banned "Arab affairs" stamp which was required during the seven-month Iraqi occupation.

Most are scuttling around to collect the five separate Kuwaiti signatures needed for an interior ministry document confirming they stood against Iraq and helped Kuwaiti families during

the crisis.

But the unwelcome Arabs — many clinging to the only home they have known — say they have little hope of acceptance.

"We will try until the very end, but we know there is no future for us in Kuwait — even if you get residency, your dignity is gone," a 26-year-old Palestinian chemist said.

"I have to leave because I could not get my indemnities until I had an exit stamp in my passport," a 30-year-old typist who was fired from his government post said.

Most Palestinians lost their jobs in retaliation for Palestine Liberation Organisation perceived sympathy for Iraq and the support some Palestinians gave Iraqi soldiers during the crisis. Many fled during the occupation and were not allowed to return.

Those who remain are the poorer people who have few options. Women and children have

left, leaving male breadwinners behind.

There is no reliable estimate for the number of other unwanted Arab nationalities left in Kuwait. Kuwaiti men married to Iraqi wives are usually able to sponsor their spouses but Kuwaiti women with Iraqi husbands are in limbo.

The government is also trying to figure out what to do with the festering political problem of the emirate's stateless Arabs (bedoun) who used to fill the ranks of its police and army.

Kuwait's partially-elected national council is studying the issue and has hinted it will find a solution before June.

The bedoun — whose numbers have fallen by half to about 100,000 — will not be affected by the Feb. 15 deadline.

But like the Palestinians, most have lost their jobs and have been sitting at home idle since liberation last February.

Iran calls for better ties with Gulf Arab neighbours

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Iran's President Hashemi Rafsanjani met with the United Arab Emirates defence minister, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, on Sunday and expressed a readiness to improve relations with neighbouring countries.

Tehran Radio, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Sheikh Mohammad as praising "Iran's principled stand and its role in maintaining peace and security in the region."

Rafsanjani, during the meeting in Tehran, expressed Iran's wish to improve relations with all Muslim and neighbouring countries, the radio said.

The Iranian president has been trying to forge closer ties with the conservative Arab monarchies along Gulf shores. The United Arab Emirates traditionally has maintained cordial ties with Iran.

The Gulf Arab states have been debating inconclusively moves toward setting up a joint security structure in the wake of the Gulf war. Iran has said it wants to be part of these arrangements, but so far it has not been invited to participate.

Tehran radio also quoted Rafsanjani as calling for more cooperation.

Saddam's opponents divided

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Iraqi opposition groups remained divided this week over the future shape of government in Iraq in the event of the downfall of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Participants said the problem blocked agreement on the date and venue of a long-awaited general congress that was supposed to map out a unified strategy for toppling the president.

The talks, which began Wednesday, have attracted representatives of 25 different factions. These include Kurdish guerrillas demanding autonomy in northern Iraq, Shiite Muslims seeking an Islamic state and former army officers advocating a liberal central government in Baghdad.

The meeting coincided with reports from Washington that President Bush has secretly authorised stepped-up covert activity to bring about Saddam's downfall. And U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said that President Saddam is in a weaker position than he has been since his defeat in the Gulf war a year ago.

Bush's top-secret authorisation, according to a government source in Washington, allows the CIA to engage in such activities as propaganda broadcasts and expanded contacts with Iraqi opposition groups.

The U.S. administration sees an potential opening for stirring up anti-Saddam efforts based on what could be growing internal unrest, said the administration

official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Kurdish leader Ali Sanjari told reporters after the fourth day of talks in Syria that a military coup was the only plausible solution, given the state of disarray in opposition ranks.

"The only force qualified to play a decisive role in this direction is the Iraqi military," he said.

He said contacts with some segments of the Iraqi military "are continuous and the Iraqi opposition presence within the ranks of the military is well-established." But he would give no details.

Sanjari said the Kurdish Front, a coalition grouping the largest guerrilla factions in northern Iraq, had made its aims in post-Saddam Iraq clear — autonomy for the 3.5 million ethnic minority

and a federal system of government.

But "there has been no explicit answer to that from the others," an indication they differed with the Kurds.

That leaves the Kurds in a difficult position. If they attended the proposed congress, it would mean the end of a dialogue begun last year with President Saddam over autonomy plans in the north, he explained.

Although the negotiations have made no progress, the contact has at least relieved some of the sufferings of the Kurdish population.

President Saddam's answer to the off-and-on Kurdish rebellion in the northern Iraq in recent years has been a halt in food, fuel and other basic supplies which come from Baghdad.

Little done to curb Afghan opium

KABUL (R) — The international community is doing little or nothing to combat increasing opium production in Afghanistan, a senior United Nations official said on Saturday.

The head of the U.N. drug programme in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Christof Conrad, said large areas of Afghan valleys were cultivated with opium poppies last year for the first time.

"The U.N. estimates that during the past two or three years

there has been an enormous increase in the production of opium in Afghanistan," he said in an interview.

Last year the United Nations said Afghanistan grew about 2,000 tonnes of opium to become the world's biggest producer.

The world body estimates that 70 per cent of heroin consumed in Europe is made from opium grown in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. special envoy in talks with Kabul leaders

KABUL (R) — A special U.N. envoy arrived in Kabul on Sunday for talks with Afghan government leaders on a peace plan to end Afghanistan's 13-year-old civil war. United Nations emissary Benon Sevan, who met Afghan rebel leaders and government officials in Pakistan last week, was due to see President Najibullah to arrange an inter-Afghan meeting to discuss an interim government. The U.N. plan envisages an assembly of 150 people, representing all sides in the conflict, which would appoint an interim government to stop the war and hold elections. Radical Afghan guerrillas have rejected the plan, calling it an international conspiracy to deny them power. But moderate rebel groups and Pakistan, which plays host to the main rebel parties and three million Afghan refugees, have backed it. Najibullah, who has survived years of armed opposition, has hinted that he is prepared to step down.

Ethiopia promised 600 million dollars in aid

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopia is to receive \$600 million in aid for an emergency rehabilitation and reconstruction programme, the official Ethiopian news agency reported on Sunday. The agency quoted the minister in charge of the state committee for foreign economic relations, Abd Al Majid, who had returned from talks in Washington with the World Bank. He said the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Community and other international organisations would provide the money in grants and loans. It would be used to construct schools, roads and bridges, to buy drugs for hospitals, and to rebuild Ethiopia's industrial and agricultural sectors. The new government set up after the ousting of Marxist military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam last May had appealed for funds to help to rebuild the country. Ethiopia's eastern region of Ogaden is stricken by drought. The country is also sheltering 500,000 Somali

refugees who have fled from a civil war in their homeland.

Spain sends illegal immigrants back to Morocco

ALMERIA, Spain (R) — Spain on Saturday deported more than 100 North Africans who tried to enter the country illegally aboard two small fishing boats earlier in the week. A police spokesman said 106 people, including several women, were put on a ferry sailing from Almeria in southeast Spain to the Spanish enclave of Melilla on the North African coast. From there they would be transported to Morocco. Two would-be immigrants drowned, apparently trying to swim ashore, and 110 others were detained after reaching land from the two overcrowded fishing boats on Thursday. They were believed to have sailed from Nador on the Moroccan coast. Coast guards were still searching the sea off Almeria for others who might have drowned. The spokesman said four of those held were released when they were found to have legal permits to work in Spain. Police said 51 other illegal Moroccan immigrants were captured on Friday in separate operations near Algeciras and Tarifa on Spain's southern coast.

Moroccans make up about half of Spain's approximately 250,000 legal and up to 300,000 illegal immigrants. Spain last year introduced a visa requirement for Moroccans.

13 drowned when boat capsizes in north Sudan

KHARTOUM (AP) — Thirteen persons are missing and believed to have drowned and another nine were saved when their boat capsized in the Nile north of Khartoum, a newspaper reported Sunday. Al Inkeaz Al Watany newspaper said the accident took place in Shendi, around 130 kilometres north of Khartoum. The paper said authorities have warned citizens that the missing bodies may appear along the banks of the Nile. It was not immediately known why the boat capsized.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Le Monde Sous Marie de Jacques-Yves

19:00 News in French

19:15 Weekly Sports Magazine

19:30 News in Hebrew

20:00 News in Arabic

20:30 Hey Dad

21:10 Capital City

22:00 News in English

22:30 The Edit

PRAYER TIMES

05:01 Fajr

06:19 (Sunrise) Duha

11:59 Dhuhr

14:53 'Asr

17:20 Maghreb

18:39 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swiech

Tel: 810740

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrace Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623441

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773551

Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811255

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654032

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The depression which affected Jordan Sunday and which was centred over the Kingdom will move slowly to the east. As a result, it will remain cold, cloudy and rainy, and snow will continue to fall on areas with an elevation of 350 metres and more. By

noon, the effect of the depression will decrease gradually. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Amman, it will be cloudy and rainy at night. Winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman -2/-2

Agila 6/12

Deceit -3/3

Jordan Valley -2/7

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 3, Agila 15. Humidity reading: Amman 99 per cent, Agila 44 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:

Dr. Mohammad Nahravi 693925

Dr. Khalid aldo 795392

Dr. Abdul Halim Tayyan 620115

Dr. Asad Al Ashbah 602507

First pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778326

Al Asena pharmacy 637055

Najrouk pharmacy 623672

Al Saba pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

ERBID:

Dr. Ali Shugairi (-)

Al Shamsa pharmacy 275825

ZARQA:

Dr. Khalid Abu Hussein (-)

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630441

Rescue 630441

Civil Defence Emergency 630441

Public Security Department 630221

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630221

Hotel Complaints 603800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repsol 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815015

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816

Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642322

Mallat, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Musader Hospital 667227

The Islamic, Abdali 665172/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26

Amry, Marfa 891617/15

Owco Alia Hospital 802240/50

Alia Hospital 674153

ZARQA:

Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Culture Ministry plans stepped-up campaign to promote writers, artists

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Culture will publish 24 books written by Jordanian authors this year, will continue to issue a series of Jordanian national heritage publications and will reprint works by Jordanian poets, of the 1940s and 1950s writers and others, according to Minister of Culture Mahmoud Al Samra.

The ministry's plans for this year also take into account cultural festivals, including plays, to be staged in Jordan and other places in the Arab World, said the minister. These programmes include children's plays in September and the ministry has prepared plays for the event, said the minister.

With reference to cultural events abroad, the minister said that Jordan will organise a Jordanian cultural event in Muscat, Oman, in May of this year. The 10-day event is designed to orient the Jordanian public on Jordanian cultural activities and movements and to bolster cultural ties between Oman and Jordan, the minister noted.

He said that the Omani event will include folklore performances representing different parts of Jordan like Fuheis and Maan as well as poetry readings, cultural seminars and book exhibitions. In addition, exhibitions of handicrafts and national costumes will also be presented.

The Ministry of Culture, Dr. Samra said, is taking part in the Seville Expo of 1992 and the first pan-Arab Children Festival to be held in September.

The minister said that the country has 75 different literary clubs and league associations as well as folkloric troupes. The ministry has allocated funds to help finance part of their programmes and to supervise their activities this year, he said.

Dr. Samra said that the Ministry of Culture will continue to support the literary movement in the Kingdom and will offer awards for distinguished literary works this year. The ministry plans to announce dates for nominations of those wishing to win the state's awards and committees to evaluate the competitors work in June of this year, Dr. Samra said.

Once the works of art and literary writings have been submitted, they will be reviewed by the committees and the names of the winners will be announced by Nov. 14 on His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, said the

minister.

He said that plans have been prepared to develop art, music and national songs and dancing as well as stage acting through a special centre for fine arts which is operating under the ministry's supervision. Dr. Samra said that students of at least 14 years of age and above will be accepted at the fine arts training centre and will receive training free of charge.

Dr. Samra noted that his ministry was embarking on a scheme of amending present legislation and cultural regulations governing cultural activities. The ministry has already submitted to the Council of Ministers a draft law on the Jordanian Artists Association and it is hoped that the law would be endorsed soon. He said that the law provides for the protection of writers' work and boosts the literary movement in Jordan.

Dr. Samra announced that the ministry was preparing studies and designs for a new national library where historic and literary documents and other precious treasures could be preserved. The national library, he said, would be set up during 1992 between the Seventh and the Eighth circles of Jabal Amman at the cost of JD



Mahmoud Al Samra

150,000.

At the same time, the ministry is going ahead with plans to publish the 1991 national bibliography in cooperation with the Jordan Library Association, the minister said. In addition, the ministry has made plans this year to hold a series of seminars at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) to discuss a host of socio-economic, administrative, cultural and intellectual issues.

The Ministry of Culture's 1992 budget totals JD 1,041 million to cover all the ministry's activities and capital and current expenses.

Saudia resumes flights to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Saudia, the Saudi Arabian national airline which halted flights to Amman in August of 1990, has decided to resume them at the rate of three a week starting Feb. 18, according to an official announcement Sunday.

The announcement was made by Ahmad Jweiber, director of the Jordan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), who welcomed the move as "one more step in the unique relations in the aviation field between Jordan and Saudi Arabia since their signing of Air Transport Agreement of 1956."

The first Saudia flight will take place Feb. 18 with the arrival in Amman of one of Saudia's aircraft at 1 p.m. from Riyadh. Mr. Jweiber said that the Riyadh-Amman flight will

continue at the rate of one a week while Saudia's flights from Jeddah to Amman will operate at the rate of two a week.

Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national airline, has not stopped its flights to Saudi Arabia since the Gulf war ended in February 1991. Mr. Jweiber noted. During the war, Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, closed their airfields to most commercial traffic.

The Saudi move was welcomed by Jordan as a sign of improving relations after the end of the Gulf crisis. Minister of Information Mahmoud Al Sharif was quoted by Reuters as saying: "We think it is a small step in this direction and we welcome it of course."

In a telephone interview, Ahmad Jweiber told the Jordan Times that Jordan did not influence the Saudi decision. "It was their own decision to

stop the flights at the time of the Gulf crisis and now it was their own decision to resume it," he pointed out.

He noted that in the past, Saudia flew 5 times a week to Amman and he hoped that the number of flights would reach that level again soon.

Asked about the economic aspects of the resumption of bilateral air links, Mr. Jweiber said he was unable to give accurate information, especially as to what was Saudia's market share of its flights to Jordan.

Saudia officials in Amman did not answer telephone calls Sunday afternoon possibly because the offices were closed because of the snowstorm in Amman.

The latest Saudi move followed other steps aimed at relaxing a ban on contacts, imposed on Jordan during the Gulf crisis.

On Oct. 16 last year, Saudi Arabia allowed Jordanian commercial trucks to enter its territory, ending a 13-month ban.

Because of Jordan's support for Iraq, Riyadh imposed travel restrictions on Jordanians, withdrew its ambassador to Amman and cut off oil supplies. It declined to renew work permits of Jordanians, forcing them to leave when the permits expired.

Jordanian officials have said privately that hopes for a substantial improvement in relations with conservative Gulf state led by Saudi Arabia appeared to have been ill-founded.

"There has been very little positive response, particularly from Saudi Arabia, to Jordan's overtures and indirect diplomatic mediation," a senior Jordanian official said recently, speaking on condition of anonymity.

JEA presidency expected to be hotly contested

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Although seven veteran engineers have nominated themselves for the presidency of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) in the elections to be held on Feb. 21, more are expected to announce their nominations shortly.

The candidates are Farouk Abu Innab, Hosni Abu Ghieda, Ziyad Abu Shamsieh, Rida Al Shboul, Yusra Al Barghouti, Fakhri Abu Shakra and Abdul Fattah Touqan.

The incumbent president, Ismail Brewish, was expected to announce he would seek another term in the coming week, according to JEA sources.

The engineers have grouped themselves into two factions: The White Faction, grouping the

Islamists, and the Green Faction, grouping the leftists and others. Eight engineers have nominated themselves for JEA board membership.

One of the approximately 1,000 unemployed engineers told the Jordan Times that his group will demand a change in the JEA principles and programmes so as to ensure the employment of the largest number of unemployed engineers.

Another engineer demanded that JEA funds be invested in income-generating projects and schemes designed to employ more engineers. These demands, he said, will be presented to the new board which is to serve for the next two years.

They said that if the Feb. 21 election sessions prove inconclusive for not meeting the quorum, voting will continue on the second day.

Budget allows for almost 9,000 new jobs

AMMAN (J.T.) — A total of 8,939 new jobs will be created with the implementation of the new government offices manning table which was approved by the Council of Ministers at a regular meeting Saturday evening.

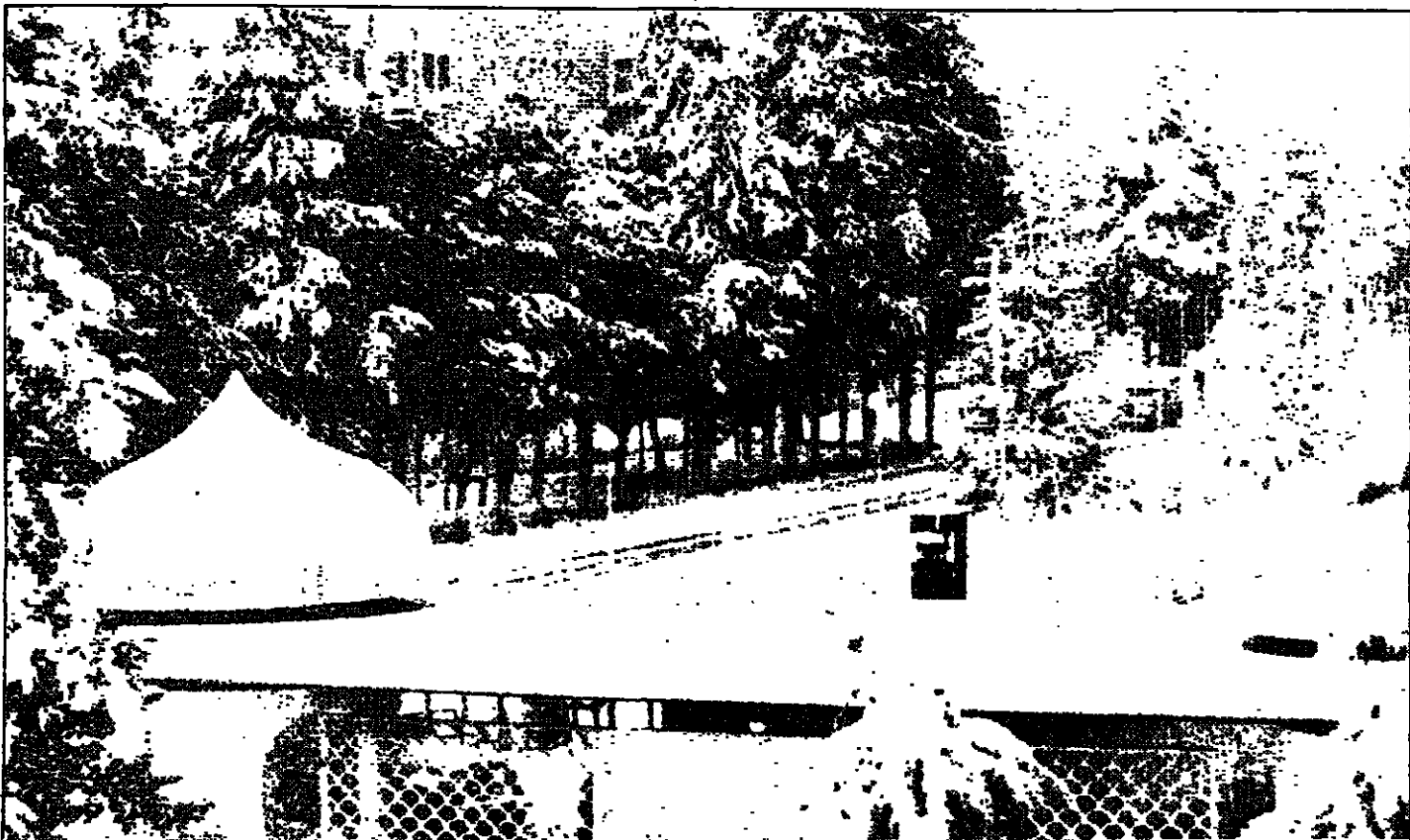
These jobs will be distributed at the following rates to various government branches: the Ministry of Education-2,400, the Health Ministry-1,500, the Youth Ministry-105, the Justice Ministry-95, the Ministry of Social Development-70, the Ministry of Higher Education-66, the Audit Bureau-53, the Telecommunications Corporation-53, the Customs Department-50, the Income Tax Department-50, the Meteorology Department-46, the Ministry of Culture-41, the Department of Lands and Survey-41, the Ministry of Finance-39,

the Interior Ministry-33, the Post Office-35 and a total of 108 posts at a number of other departments.

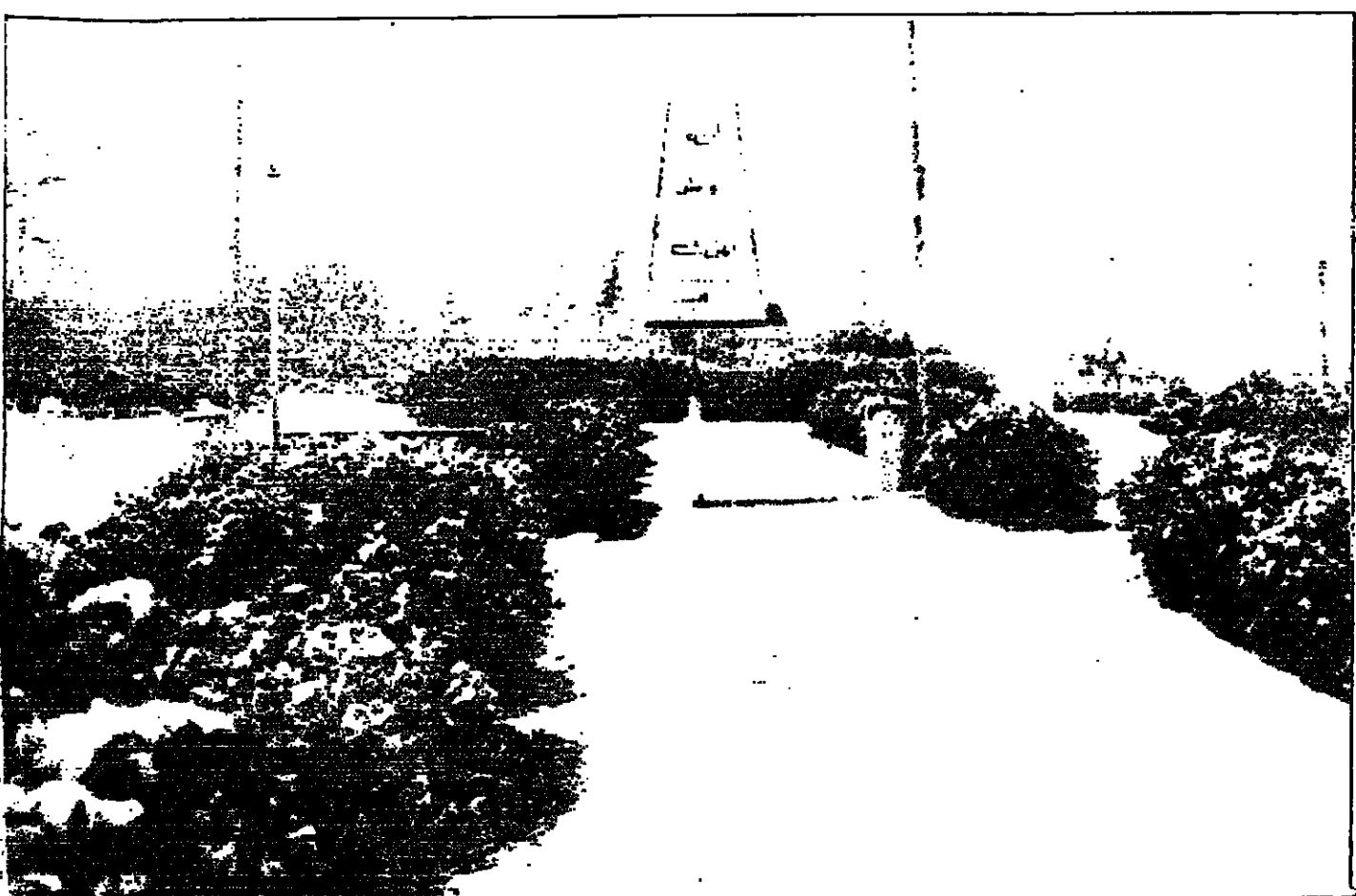
The jobs were created on the basis of the 1992 fiscal budget approved by Parliament according to a statement following the Cabinet meeting. It said that in the 1992 fiscal budget there will be 110,670 posts in government offices, up from the 102,793 in the past fiscal year.

The Council of Ministers requested various departments to speed up the necessary procedure connected with the appointment of new persons in their jobs, a process which, it said, has to stop by Oct. 31, so that the general budget department can prepare the new table for the 1993 fiscal budget.

WINTER WONDERLAND



PICTURE PRETTY — Jordan, again blanketed by heavy snowfall all day Sunday, looked like a winter wonderland. The mass of white covered trees, streets and buildings, giving Jordanians a picture perfect country (photos by Youssef Al 'Allan)



Council decides to stop issuing licences for new universities

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Education Council has decided to stop issuing further licences to anyone wishing to set up private community colleges or universities in Jordan.

A statement Sunday said that the council, meeting under the chairmanship of Minister of Higher Education Awad Khleifat, decided that no more licences will be issued for such institutions until further notice.

The statement, however, said that the council might issue a licence in the future for the creation of higher educational institu-

tions in governorates which lack any of them.

According to the statement, the council discussed the question of licensing colleges and universities in light of the current number of community colleges and universities and their distribution around the Kingdom.

The statement voiced the council's determination to see that all the existing private universities have their own permanent faculties, with teachers employed on a permanent basis and not merely seconded by other universities. It said that private universities

should not rely on temporary faculties but should rather build their own staff and assign members of various faculties to acquire higher degrees to be eligible for their profession.

The council also dedicated part of its discussion to undergraduate and post graduate students in private universities as well as the subjects taught in the private colleges and universities. Special care was given to those specialisations which already exist in official universities which turn out graduates with similar degrees of little demand by the local market.



Awad Khleifat

The statement said that graduating a large number of students with similar degrees with poor prospects for employment can only further compound the unemployment problem in Jordan.

Organisation to help poor in south

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Human Appeal International Organisation announced Sunday that it will distribute relief supplies and food to the people of southern Jordan affected by the snowstorm in the past two months.

A spokesman for the organisation said that the distribution, which will start Monday, will include food supplies, medicines and blankets benefiting the need people of the south.

The organisation's spokesman, Adham Sirhan, said that the organisation, which was established in 1981 in the United Arab Emirates, has established branches around the world including Jordan's branch which was set up in

1989 to offer services to the needy people.

Mr. Sirhan said that the aid is distributed to people suffering from the effects of natural disasters and other emergencies. Furthermore, the organisation finances projects like road building, drilling of artesian wells, building clinics and schools and mosques in poor villages and gives care to orphans until the age of 18, Mr. Sirhan noted.

He said that the organisation's funds come from donors from Arab and foreign countries and through income-generating projects. He said that the organisation has been cooperating with Jordanian charitable institutions.

House meetings again postponed

AMMAN (Petra) — For the second time within one week snowstorms have postponed meetings by the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament. Speaker of the Upper House Ahmad Al Lawzi decided to postpone the House's session, which was scheduled for Monday morning, till further notice. Lower House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat also postponed the House's Sunday meeting for a date to be announced later.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Salma Al Abaq at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of drawings by the French school's kindergarten children at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of oil and water colour paintings by Tete Wegelins, Lucy Mario, Hada Bitar and Jennifer Bowker at Alla Art Gallery — opening ceremony at 5:30 p.m.
- ★ Graphic art exhibition by Sadek Kwaish at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street — opening ceremony at 6 p.m.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Who's There?" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

FILM

- ★ French film entitled "Therese" at the French Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture about the excavation works at Pella by Stephen Bourke of the University of Sydney at the American Centre for Oriental Research (ACOR) — 7 p.m.

Symposium

- ★ Symposium, in Arabic, on the performance of the Lower House of Parliament at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation — 6 p.m.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan, France discuss cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif received Sunday French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bouchard and discussed with him bilateral relations between Jordan and France. Mr. Sharif and Mr. Bouchard also discussed cooperation in the field of information, particularly regarding the exchange of television and radio programmes in addition to news letters.

Al Bashir ready for emergencies

AMMAN (Petra) — Director of Al Bashir Government Hospital Suheil Al Kayad said Sunday the hospital's emergency unit was supplied with all the needed facilities and equipment to enable it to receive emergency cases in the prevailing weather conditions. Dr. Kayad said the hospital had assigned eight vehicles to get employees at the hospital from their homes. He added that the hospital had prepared an emergency plan for all its sections and units in preparation for any case.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242-696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Lesson made of snow

SEVERAL YEARS ago, in some winter in the mid-eighties, a severe snowstorm sneaked through the gates of global warming, hitting Britain so hard that the British were furious. The Brits did not object so much to an act of God: they merely directed their fury at their weathermen who, according to newspaper headlines at the time, had "bungled" it, having failed to predict the onset of the storm.

Among the complaints heard against weather conditions this winter in Jordan, there are only a few directed at our Meteorological Department. So confident has the director of that department grown in his job in fact that he is now travelling abroad, leaving his assistants to hold the fort for him, even in the middle of the new storm that hit yesterday and which is likely to continue today and maybe beyond.

The acting director did issue a statement Friday warning of new rain and snow. The statement, however, was so brief and vague that the Jordan Times' weather editor at least understood it to mean something else. "Kingdom to get short breather from rains, snow," declared the headline of the weather story in yesterday's newspaper. No sooner had the editorial staff started to reach the newspaper offices, having experienced extreme difficulties getting here following the accumulation of snow in the morning, than the search earnestly began in order to see just who bungled it: the weatherman in charge or the editor in question. The conclusion was that the newspaper did bungle it, but not without sizeable help from the acting director. True the latter had warned of rain and snow (on hilly areas, i.e. above 800 metres), but he did not talk of a new "snowstorm" that in the final analysis might have turned out to be as severe as that of last week, the week before and several weeks earlier and so on literally.

In admitting our not infallible coverage of the weather, and apologising to our readers for the misleading headline yesterday, we would like to stress that the change of climate, which is universally called the "weather," is not the issue here. What is more important to talk about is how we Jordanians have interacted with it. To this end, we cite both positive and negative experiences.

On the minus side, some of our people have insisted on ignoring their civic duties and sense, and there was no substantial effort made to remind them of it. Those people who went to buy bread worth four or five dinars, depriving others of the chance to buy just a kilogramme or two (worth only a few hundred fils) for their families, evidently did not understand or want to understand that the Kingdom needed their individual contribution, no matter how small, for the benefit of the whole country.

On the plus side, some people have learned the virtues of good judgement, at least by learning not to trust the weather, especially in a winter like this one. Here is one small example.

The speaker of the Lower House of Parliament had to postpone the House's regular session last Wednesday because of the snowstorm that had hit a day earlier. At the same time, he designated yesterday for the meeting. Little did he know that a new blizzard would hit us Sunday, and little did he care to know it might just happen.

In deciding to postpone the session yet another time, the speaker yesterday issued a new kind of statement. "The House's next meeting will be announced later," he said in it. The speaker of the Upper House did likewise, reflecting in their decisions a sort of political maturity that hardly existed only a week earlier.

Stay home folks if you do not need to get out for work or any other urgent matter. You will not miss much if you do not read this editorial.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily commented on statements by U.S. President George Bush in which he expressed his deep hatred towards Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and said that Washington had earlier voiced its total hostility towards Iraq and the Iraqi leader through its aggression last year and through its continued embargo. The hostile campaign launched by the U.S. president is a continuation of the war on the Iraqi people whose children, women and the sick face death because of it and because of the U.S.-led plots that continue under the U.N. umbrella, said the paper. It said that Mr. Bush is trying to exploit the Gulf war and the victories of the allied forces in crushing the military might of the Iraqi leader to benefit his election campaign in order to win another mandate at the White House. Indeed, Mr. Bush is racing against time to win the voters' support in the coming election and is coupling his hostile campaign against the Iraqi president with continued conspiracies with London and Paris against the Iraqi population, said the paper. Mr. Bush, like John Major and other Western leaders, believe that the more brutal they appear towards their enemies the more popularity they win among the voters, the paper added. We wonder what honour such men can get and what fame in history they will have as a result of their atrocities and their lust for killing innocent civilians, the paper said. It said that these leaders believe that they can find solutions to their own countries' problems through further acts of terrorism and criminal behaviour.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily discussed the consequences of the rain and stormy season affecting Jordan citing the repeated landslides along the Amman-Dead Sea road. The road near Adash witnesses landslides every winter season, endangering the travellers and causing chaos to communication, said Nazli. The writer said that the road is supposed to be one of the most modern in Jordan, built only recently with the specifications by the Ministry of Public Works or by contractors acting under the ministry's supervision. Nazli said that those supervising the road construction did not give due care to the designs or the terrain as they embarked on their enterprise, or they cheated on the materials used in the construction. He said that the designers, the engineers, the contractors and the supervisors all share the responsibility for the safety of the road.

Weekly Political Pulse

Much ado about the new international disorder

The U.N. Security Council summit held at the end of January came out with sweeping conclusions on how to govern the world in the wake of the new era that dawned after the collapse of the communist order. The leaders of the big five at the council spoke of many new interesting ideas on collective security and so-called preventive diplomacy. French President Francois Mitterrand immediately offered no less than one thousand French troops to man a new international force that is supposed to police the poorer comity of nations. Other countries immediately echoed similar sentiment, notably Hungary, Austria and Belgium. U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali was also instructed to submit definitive proposals by July 1 on how to make the U.N. system more effective and on ways and means to make the U.N. peacekeeping machinery much more potent in dealing with the new world situation. In the process, the council has increased its mandate and jurisdiction not by amending the existing Charter, which no one wants to touch for fear of opening a Pandora's box, but by liberal interpretation of the Charter itself in favour of the 15-member council. What is striking in this vein, is the explicit incorporation of human rights issues into the running agenda of the council. In other words, gross and systematic violations of human rights worldwide would no longer be confined to U.N. Commission on Human Rights or its subsidiary bodies, but also be viewed as threats to international peace and security.

There is really nothing wrong in such an expansion of the domain of the Security Council, provided a mechanism is also incorporated to make sure that the application of this novel perspective would not be conducted on an ad hoc or selective

basis. For indeed, grave human rights violations are clear threats to peace and stability in the world. But given the composition of the council and the fact that the permanent members remain lukewarm to any proposal to expand its membership, there will always be fears that the scrutiny of human rights abuses would be conducted on a rather biased basis.

Of all the issues dealt with by the final communique issued by the Security Council summit, disarmament received most of the attention. In this vein, both Washington and Moscow announced drastic reduction in their strategic nuclear arsenals, which is obviously good news for mankind at large. What is troubling about the long reference to arms reductions across the board was the call on all nuclear countries to refrain from aiding or abetting the proliferation of such weapons and other mass destruction arms. Of course this is in line with the Non-Proliferation Treaty which the greater majority of the countries of the world subscribed to many years ago. The catch in this seemingly benign perspective is the fact that existing nuclear powers would continue to enjoy a monopolistic control over them while depriving others meaning the undeveloped countries, from ever possessing them. For us, in the Middle East, this orientation would necessarily mean that Israel will continue to possess and develop nuclear and thermonuclear arms in addition to other forms of mass destruction weapons while the other Middle East nations would be effectively prohibited from having the same. Had the Security Council called on Israel as well to rid itself of such armament, the call for ending the proliferation of such weapons would hold more water. As is, the Arab countries are called upon to stay at the mercy and hegemony of Israel for time immemorial.

There is obviously something lacking in this lopsided approach to disarmament which makes it that much less tenable and permanent.

In this vein, China was finally "persuaded" by the other big four nuclear powers to yield to this logic by calling on it to refrain also from extending nuclear technology to countries that do not also have it. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker announced this Chinese commitment with much fanfare last week in a bid to show that Peking will also have to toe the line set by Washington on this issue, or else ...

So much for the new international order that is increasingly manifesting a new model of tyranny that is bound to solicit a counter-reaction sooner or later. Not that there is anything wrong in implementing the Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons. Rather, it is the lopsided way in which it is being pursued and executed. Such a situation would put the Third World permanently and squarely in an inferior position that is projected to make them subservient to the whims and dictates of the stronger nations of the world for as long as the existing vintage of international order remains the law of the globe.

For the Arab World this state of international affairs would necessarily spell turbulent days ahead, characterised by desperate efforts to frustrate the negative application of the new international law and order. Yet, all signs point to the near inevitability of the new international hegemony by the haves over the have nots. One can only wait with impatience for a historical correction of this imbalance that may take many decades before it is achieved.

A new Arab order can help achieve progress in the region — Kabariti

By Salameh N'namit
Special to the Jordan Times



Abdul Karim Al Kabariti

AMMAN — Warning that "Desert Storm" may not be the last storm to hit the region, a prominent Jordanian minister has called on Arab states to "face realities" and begin to deal with "explosive regional issues before they escalate."

Labour Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, who served as acting foreign minister during Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber's absence in Moscow and Cyprus last week, and as acting Information Minister when Mr. Mahmoud Al Sharif was in Morocco the week before, said that attempts to isolate Jordan had preceded the Gulf crisis, escalating as the Kingdom turned into a "force of change in the region through its democratic transition, pursuit of freedom and human rights."

Mr. Kabariti warned that the failure of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations may lead to "the consolidation of extremism, the strengthening of hardliners and to rising feelings of hatred, in addition to a waste of resources on both sides."

Asked on the status of Jordanian coordination with Syria and Egypt in the context of the peace process, the minister said the fact that 11 Arab states attended the multilateral talks alongside Jordan, in addition to Syria's parti-

beginning on the road of collective planning towards a united negotiating position," Mr. Kabariti said, noting that Jordanian-Palestinian coordination should serve as "an example for cooperation to be emulated."

Jordan's concern for maintaining special relations with Syria, and the importance of the Egyptian role, together serve as a beginning towards better coordination and deeper cooperation, Mr. Kabariti said. "In the coming phase of negotiations," he added, "I do not think that differences over the multilateral talks will be a cause of friction among Arab states."

Mr. Kabariti, who is a member of the Lower House from Aqaba, said the American role in the negotiations was "indispensable," pointing out that Washington had a stake in peace in the Middle East "due to its wish to see a new world order that cannot be established without stability being attained in the richest oil-producing region in the world."

He noted that while the U.S. "may appear closer to Israel's position on procedural issues, it is closer to the Arab position when it comes to substance. This is why we must not allow Israel the chance to exploit this in its attempts to obstruct the peace process."

"The truth of the matter is that our positions have consistently been in line with our principles and final goals. We do not succumb to blackmail and we do not believe in fighting by proxy. We believe in dialogue and we fight to win other's trust. For this, we have paid a price in blood and money. But when we look back, we only feel proud in the consistency of the Jordanian position."

"Right from the beginning of the Gulf crisis, we found nothing in it that serves our interests or achieves our goals, but rather a threat to Arab national security. Not for one day did we accept or condone the occupation of Kuwait, and we have never served as an echo to this or that state. And if our belief in the need to restore balance to the distribution of wealth and population in the Arab World coincided with a pretext used (by Iraq) to justify a military action, this does not mean that we agree with the policy of the use of force to settle conflict or achieve goals among Arab states. And for the record, I would say that attempts to isolate Jordan preceded the occupation of Kuwait and escalated with Jordan's transition into a force for change on the road to democracy, freedom and human

rights in the region. And because Jordan, despite its difficulties, still maintains a bright record in the area of democracy, freedom and human rights, I suspect that its isolation will continue for some time."

On the network of regional alliances borne out of the Gulf crisis, Mr. Kabariti said such alliances "will remain of symbolic rather than real importance in the absence of a clear strategic vision."

"Such alliances will not guarantee that 'Desert Storm' will be the last of storms to hit the region. Arabs must face realities and deal with explosive issues not the least of which is the Arab-Israeli conflict, the water crisis, the imbalance in the distribution of wealth and populations, schemes to control Arab resources and attempts to marginalise the Arab role in the world. All this cannot be dealt with through emotional meeting and topical alliances and cooperation council. It is a test which requires a resumption of Arab-Arab dialogue with the goal of building a new Arab order with which we can face the next century to achieve progress for our peoples. A failure to do that means maintaining the status quo, marginalising the Arab position and more frustration, extremism and conflicts."

Investing in oil production needed, experts warn

By Clare Pedrick

LONDON — With Soviet oil production plummeting and world demand back on a strong upward trend fuel shortages could be with us again before the end of the decade, according to experts at the Centre for Global Energy Studies (CGES) set up by former Saudi Arabian oil minister Sheikh Ahmad Yamani.

Forecasters at the centre paint a grim picture of the future if urgent steps are not taken to fund new investment in oil exploration and production, and to find a lasting solution to the political problems of the Middle East. They predict that global energy demand, which fell dramatically after prices soared in the late 1970s and early 1980s, will rise steadily until at least the end of this century.

Dr. Aliro Parra, senior advisor to Sheikh Yamani at the centre and the former managing director of Petroleos de Venezuela for Europe, says he believes demand will increase at a rate of about one million barrels per day each year for the foreseeable future. The 13-member cartel OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) is currently pumping 23.6 million barrels per day.

Extra production to cope with the increased demand will mainly have to come from the Gulf region, says Dr. Parra. And the Gulf crisis clearly pointed up the risks of instability in that region and the potential economic havoc it can wreak on the rest of the world. "Such a strong reliance on a single area the question of supply security within a new political dimension, and poses a major challenge for international cooperation," said Dr. Parra.

At the Knightsbridge offices of the CGES, furnished with antiques, many of them from the personal collection of Sheikh

Yamani, "cooperation" is the key word. If there is to be any stability in world energy supplies and prices, oil producers and consumers must start talking, say CGES staff. After years of exactly the opposite situation, a new era of dialogue may seem unlikely. But, says Dr. Parra, it is the only way forward. "Without this, we are condemned to relive the turbulence of the last 20 years," he explained. "We will have periods of feast and famine, surpluses and then periods of great shortages, like we did in the 1970s when prices shot up. I think it is in everybody's interest to avoid that."

"Energy is a commodity of vast strategic and political importance," he added. "Oil affects everybody. It certainly affects the living standards of the producers, but violent, harmful price fluctuations also affect the world's markets and inflation rates."

In concrete terms, Dr. Parra and his colleagues at the CGES want to see discussion at policy and technical level between oil producing and consumer nations, and the giant oil corporations. They believe the industrialised nations, which are the major consumers, should be freer with transfers of technology and management skills, often badly lacking in the petroleum-producing countries. This would improve production, lessen risks of environmental damage and help ensure a stable supply of energy for the future, says Dr. Parra. Prices too need to be stabilised, but not by price-fixing. "Price-fixing is part of history," said the Venezuelan-born oil executive. "I think what most producers and consumers are interested in attaining is a reasonable price which will allow investment to flow in and which will not reduce consumption." The ideal, says Dr. Parra, would be what he calls a "happy medium."

At the London energy centre, experts have calculated an optimum figure of around \$18 per

42-gallon barrel. The current price is close to that — \$18.70. "A higher price, up about \$25, would probably cause a surplus and constrain demand," said Dr. Parra. "A price that is too low would reduce the possibilities for exploration, and increase demand." That is exactly what happened when, faced with the price slump of the 1980s, producer nations cut back on investment and refurbishment.

Now, warn oil experts, because of other financial constraints, most producers are still plowing in the funds that are needed to ensure future supplies. "We talk about surpluses of supplies, but the real problem is shortages as we get into the decade," said Dr. Parra. "If you are not continually investing, you are condemning yourselves to lower capacity later on. That is the major problem of the 1990s."

The Soviet Union, the world's largest petroleum producer with a potential for a far greater output, is the classic example. Mismanagement and outdated technology have helped push production down from 12 million barrels a day four years ago to a current daily output of 10.5 million, with predictions that it will fall still further, by an annual average of five to seven per cent in the coming years. A report published by the CGES and based on a study by a team of Soviet experts calculates that the USSR need to drill more than 11,000 new wells in 1992 if it is to stem the fall in output. "Their pipeline system is in a shambles, the pipes are corroded. They have had no programme for replacement and refurbishment," noted Dr. Parra. But Gulf producers are also lagging behind in investment, and financing is becoming more and more of a problem. "There are few producing countries, possibly more than one or two, which do not have severe financial constraints," said Dr. Parra. "As funds become smaller, deeper,

more difficult, or are located in remote areas, costs will rise." The CGES has estimated that in the Gulf area alone, the costs, excluding war damage, of finding and developing an additional five million barrels per day of net new capacity could add up to more than \$70 billion. "That is a massive amount of money," said Dr. Parra. "And I doubt if it is available."

Even if investment policies were to change overnight, the effects would not be seen until the dawn of the new century. In the Soviet Union, a handful of Western companies have signed joint venture deals and more are poised to clinch similar agreements. But upheavals after the failed coup have put plans back at least six months, say oil experts, and the injection of foreign funds and know-how will come too late to serve any purpose this decade. "Oil needs a long-term planning period," said Dr. Parra. "Between exploring and producing, there is a lag of seven to ten years, so unless you have a horizon in front of you, and reasonable expectations of stability, you may not invest what you should. That's why we should be talking. You've got to talk, you've got to discuss, you've got to set the rules of the game. You've got to agree on what the future will look like."

The London Centre for Global Energy Studies was established to do just that. It aims to serve as a forum for discussion between parties which in the past have found themselves as opposite sides. Dialogue and cooperation are two tenets dear to Sheikh Yamani, who regards the centre as one of his favourite projects. He flies in regularly to monitor its progress and has promised funding for at least five years. After that, he has said, it should become self-financing, through the sale of reports and other consultation services.

As well as organising seminars and publishing bi-monthly re-

ports, the CGES fosters research into the economic, environmental and political implications of the energy issue. A Japanese researcher recently arrived on a fellowship to study the fast changing Far East energy market. Said Dr. Parra: "It's actually more than a market (it has) production, demand. It's changing structurally, demand is growing fast, the companies themselves are changing, the laws governing development are changing and there is a possibility that the market may hold the key to future demand."

Launched in January 1990, the centre's timing was fortuitous, or, in Dr. Parra's opinion, perfect. Within six months, the Gulf crisis had erupted, and the energy question had once more been thrust to the fore of world leaders' agendas. The subject of the first annual conference was hurriedly changed to address the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. This year's conference, scheduled to be held Sept. 23 and 24 in London — the same dates are OPEC's annual congress in Geneva — will address the need for lasting peace and oil security.

In the short term, the problem will be how to control the reentry of Kuwait and Iraq into the oil producing market, and ensure they do not produce dangerous surpluses, which could then lead to a fall in prices, says CGES experts.

But in the longer term, the conflict has highlighted the need for greater stability. In that sense, the Gulf crisis has had a positive outcome, says Dr. Parra. He says it had acted as a catalyst, forcing governments and people to reassess the future in the fields of politics, economy and energy. "War brings change, and I think there has to be a change in thinking," he said. "For that change to coalesce and be translated into practical decision takes time."

There are already signs that some progress has been made,

and the London centre had played its part. Its last conference spawned other international meetings, which it hosted in London, and which saw opinion leaders discussing issues that included the Arab-Israeli conflict. "In any peace agreement, energy is part of it," said Dr. Parra. "There was also discussion of the need to distribute wealth more equally in the Middle East, the need for more democracy, the need for assistance between the poor countries and the rich countries of the Middle East."

In July, the CGES played a leading role in a Paris seminar for ministers from oil producing and consumer nations, an event Dr. Parra describes as an important first step on the road to dialogue between the two parties. At the end of this year, the International Energy Agency is planning to sponsor a meeting for technical experts between producer and consumer countries, and in 1992, Norway has plans to host a similar event at the political level.

"People are getting to know how each side thinks, and that is very important," said Dr. Parra. After more than 30 years spent in the oil business, Dr. Parra says he is encouraged at the way attitudes are evolving. "In the industry, the emphasis is on operations, on know-how, on decision-making," he said. "People who think are not always the most appreciated. But they are tending to be more so now."

With no new wonder fuel products on the horizon, dependency on petroleum is a reality we are likely to have to live with for a long time, he says. The use of substitute energy sources such as coal and gas has gone as far as it can. "I think we will need oil for many, many years to come," said Dr. Parra. "I think it will be a growing market and I think it will continue to be well into the next century. And there are massive resources still to be tapped." — World News Link.

هنا من الامم

A planetary mistake

The following article is a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) news feature.

ONE of the greatest mistakes of our times is the failure to realise the potential of family planning or improving the quality of life on earth, according to the 1992 report from UNICEF. "Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost than any other single 'technology' now available to the human race," says the report, "and it is not widely appreciated that this would still be true even if there were no such thing as a population problem."

Approximately 500,000 women die every year from causes related to pregnancy and giving birth, and approximately 13 million children die each year before reaching the age of five. Many, perhaps most, of those deaths occur when births are spaced less than two years apart, or when there have been four or more previous births, or when the mother is younger than 18 or older than 35. The well-informed timing and spacing of births, says the report, could therefore save the lives of hundreds of thousands of young women and many millions of young children every year.

Quality of life

The report shows that family planning can have a profound effect on the quality of life as well as on the quantity of death. It can relieve women of the physical and mental burdens of having too many children too close together. And it can give them more time for education and training, for child care and community activities, for their own personal development, and for the "rest and leisure which are virtually unknown to millions of women in the developing world today."

Fewer and more widely spaced births would also improve the lives of hundreds of millions of the world's children. The incidence and severity of malnutrition would drop sharply and the overall quality of child care would also rise as parents invest more of their time, energy, and money in bringing up a smaller number of children.

One of the goals agreed on at the 1990 World Summit for Children was that, by the year 2000, all couples should have "information on the importance of responsible planning of family size and the many advantages of child spacing to avoid pregnancies that are too early, too late, too many or too frequent." This agreement, signed by the representatives of 159 nations including 71 presidents and prime ministers, should mark the beginning of a renewed commitment to family planning, says UNICEF.

Because family planning has such a profound effect on maternal and child health, says the organisation's Executive Director James Grant, it could also boost progress towards many of the other year 2000 goals adopted at the summit — including a one-third reduction in child deaths, a halving of child malnutrition, a halving of maternal mortality, and a reduction in the incidence of low birth weight to 10 per cent or less.

Population slow-down

In addition to these quality of life benefits, the achievement of the family planning goal would also help to resolve the great planetary problems of population

growth and environmental deterioration.

A strong demand for family planning already exists. Evidence from the World Fertility Survey suggests that approximately one third of all pregnancies in the world are unwanted. If all women were able to decide how many children to have and when, then the rate of population growth would fall by approximately 30 per cent. By the year 2025, that fall would translate into 1.3 billion fewer people — roughly the equivalent of the population of China today.

For all of these reasons, says the UNICEF report, providing people with the knowledge and the means to plan births in one of the most effective and least expensive ways of improving the quality of life on earth — both now and in the future.

"Clouds of controversy and concealment have long hung over the family planning issue," says Mr. Grant, "but the range of methods now available means that family planning can now be promoted and practised in ways which are sensitive to the religious and cultural contours of almost all societies. The benefits of family planning need be denied to no one."

The costs of providing family planning services, in relation to these benefits, are almost absurdly small. "When so much stands to be achieved by the meeting of an existing demand and at so low a cost," concludes the UNICEF report, "it seems reasonable to propose that an effort now be made, on an entirely new scale, to put the knowledge and the means of family planning at the disposal of every couple of child-bearing age before the end of this present century."

Workers sacrifice pay to save Eastern German plant

By Alexander Ferguson
Reuters

ZSCHOPAU, GERMANY — Workers are investing their own pay to save an East German motorcycle plant, a novel initiative in a labour force that has accepted mass shutdowns in the ex-communist region with hardly a murmur.

The state-owned MZ plant, the world's biggest when built in 1922, went into liquidation last December after the German government's Treuhand Privatisation Agency decided it could no longer afford to bail out the huge losses involved.

But workers at Motorradwerk Zschopau GmbH (MZ) refused to accept the closure. They offered 10 per cent of their salaries to finance losses and in return received a stay of execution.

"We asked for half a year to let us prove that MZ can survive," Works Council Chairman Andre Hunger said.

MZ workers have little time to disprove sceptics, who say it is wasted money. They have staged repeated demonstration and threatened court action against the Treuhand.

The agency is engaged in selling off state-owned enterprises in what was east Germany.

The Treuhand deal gives MZ, known internationally for its sturdy motorbikes, time to launch a

new 500cc model in April in a bid to hit its target of selling 25,000 bikes this year.

But the company's survival hinges on whether its newly established dealer network buys the new bikes. Dealers could be upset because MZ is officially still in liquidation, but workers say they will wait and see what happens after July when they're finished, Mr. Hunger said.

MZ has a proud tradition. It's plant pioneered the two-stroke motorcycle engine and popularised inexpensive, low-maintenance motorbikes.

The Treuhand, which has already ploughed 70 million marks (\$44 million) into MZ, is providing the lion's share of the money needed to keep the plant going until July.

But its insistence on MZ remaining in liquidation leads Mr. Hunger to suspect that the agency, dominated by West German business executives, wants the project to fail to deliver final proof that the company has to close.

"One has to assume there's some plan behind this," he said. "MZ's workers are contributing 500,000 marks (\$314,000) to cover expected losses of 10 million marks (\$6 million)."

Another two million marks (\$1.26 million) is coming from Saxony state, which has also promised to recompensate work-

ers if the project folds. Although they will get their money back, Mr. Hunger insists that the plan is still a sacrifice for plant workers who make a net average of 1,200 marks (\$720) a month.

"Ten per cent of your net salary is a lot for a father with two children and a wife who is unemployed, as most are around here," he said.

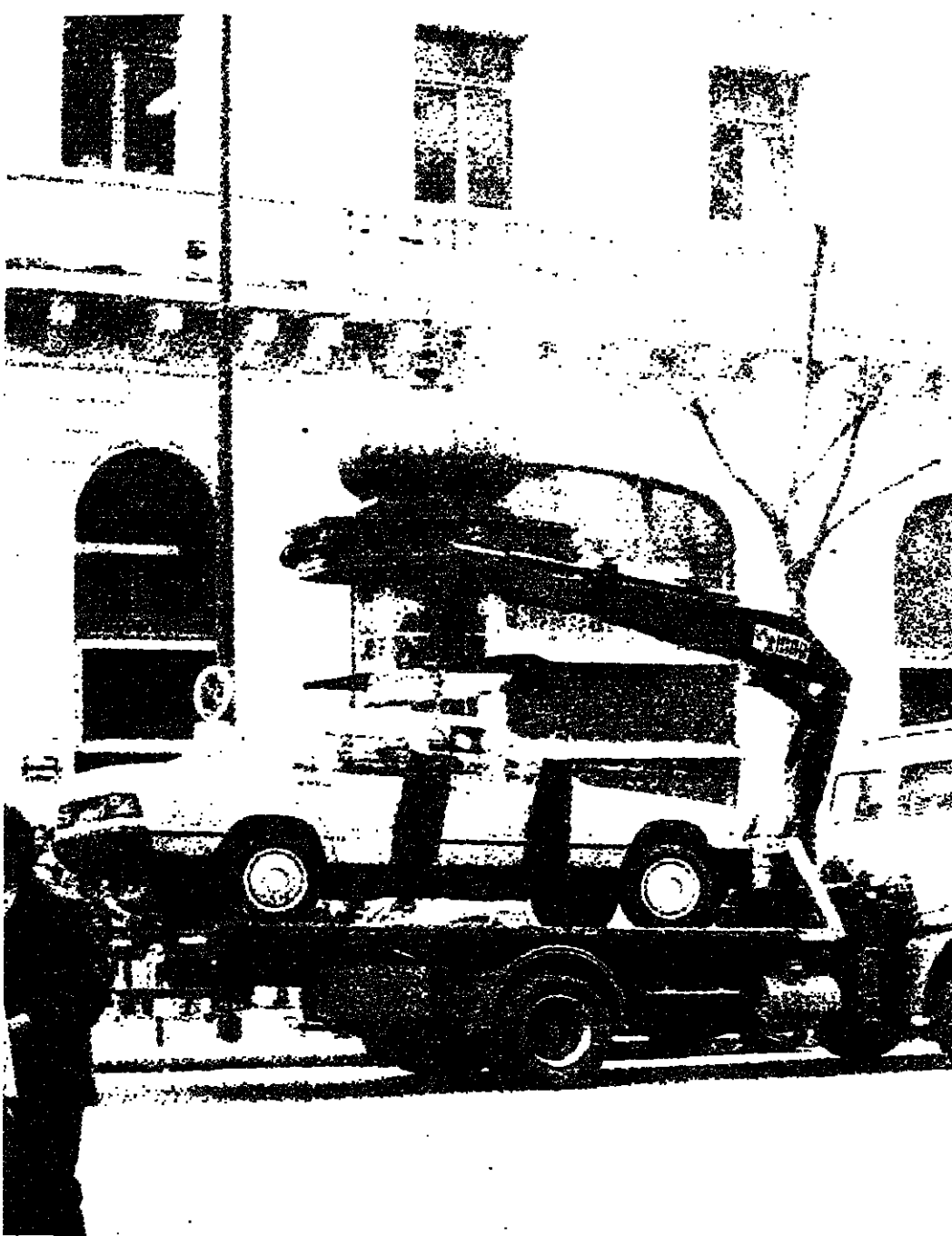
MZ has slashed its workforce to 600 from 3,000 to improve productivity. But the ND and International Consultants Price Waterhouse still failed to find a buyer despite approaching more than 50 potential investors.

The plant lost its domestic market in 1990 when it was invaded by flashier Japanese and Western bikes after the two German economies merged three months before full unification.

Unlike other East German companies, MZ did not qualify for preferential export credit guarantees to keep customers in the former Soviet Union, which once bought nearly half its output.

The Economics Ministry argued that motorbikes were not essential imports for the former Soviet Union.

MZ's sales therefore crashed from more than 70,000 motorbikes in 1990 to only 15,000 last year, with the company losing 66 million marks (\$42 million) on a turnover of 102 million marks



Automatic carpark helps facilitate traffic and avoid car thefts

Automatic carpark where cars park themselves

By Alain Faujas

The anxiety of having to go down in an underground carpark is over. There is no longer the risk of having one's car-radio stolen. Entirely automatic carpark are going to become more widespread in Paris and in big French towns to the greatest delight of the motorists.

The idea is simple. The ticket-holder or owner of a parking space puts his microchip card into an electronic reader which opens the door to a small chamber. The motorist drives his car onto a transport platform inside the chamber. He puts on the hand-brake, locks his doors and leaves his car. A programmed mechanism then takes over. The chamber closes. It is, in fact, a kind of lift with a platform which goes down. The platform stops in front of a free space and the trolley places the car in it. It is put into a kind of drawer.

To get the car back, the user puts his card into the automatic reader and his car is brought out, facing the right way, in about two minutes.

Security agents supervise all the operations in a central control office where a series of screens enables them to check that the operations are carried out smoothly and that the automatic mechanisms in several carpark functions correctly. Nobody actually goes into the carpark.

itself, which considerably limits risks of theft or vandalism.

This kind of carpark is particularly suitable for built-up areas and zones which are difficult to reach, as they do not require a central alley or an exit road. This makes it possible to cut down the ground area of the carpark to a minimum.

Such a carpark can fit into spare space, in the courtyard of a block of flats, under a garden or even under a street and it can thus be built near the users in a place where a traditional underground carpark would not be possible. Whether it has a cylindrical or rectangular cross-section, this carpark is always small and, in its deepest version, has fewer than 200 spaces.

There are already carpark of this kind in Tours and in Cagnes-sur-Mer. The Compagnie des Parcs Automatisés (CPA), a subsidiary of the Générale des Eaux group, which is the biggest French group for providing services to communities and is specialised in running municipal services, has drawn up two projects for Paris with help from industrialists in high-tech mechanics, electro-mechanics, automation and telemanagement.

These two projects, for which planning permission has been obtained, are to lead concession agreements with the city of Paris. The first plan is to build the

Grenier Saint Lazare underground carpark for 72 cars on six levels. The second, the Baudoyer carpark, which is also underground, will have a capacity of 102 spaces on nine levels.

They are to come into operation at the end of 1993. The estimated cost of one parking space is 240,000 francs for a life of sixty-five years, plus monthly service charges of 300 francs. Priority will be given for people living within a radius of 300 metres.

This automatic carpark reduces the problem of cars being permanently parked on the surface. Elderly people, who do not travel much, leave their cars parked in the same place and are wary of using carpark because of their lack of security. They claim to be interested by such a system. Market research shows that there is a potential demand for this kind of carpark, even if, for the time being, it is a limited market.

Japan, which has 200,000 semi-automatic parking spaces, Germany, Switzerland and Italy are involved in this technological race which will make it possible to save precious square metres in town centres. France will play her part all the more brilliantly as her experience in automation guarantees reliable systems, sparing users the inconvenience of not being able to get their cars back when they want them — L'actualite en France.

Poverty may cause Soviet nuclear experts to sell secrets

By Edith M. Lederer
The Associated Press

LONDON — Economic hardship in the former Soviet Union virtually assures that nuclear mercenaries will sell expertise or hard-to-track components to nations trying to build a bomb, Western defence experts say.

"Everything is up for grabs," said Dr. Martin Navias, a lecturer in the Department of War Studies at Kings College, University of London.

"The rapidity of the collapse makes it an area where people with money can get what they want. The ability of the republics to control what they've got inside is very weak. That is the essence of the problem."

Unconfirmed reports say Iran and Libya have hired Soviet nuclear scientists and bought technology, and that other would-be nuclear states are shopping for talent and weapons.

Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control in Washington, said the "greatest risk is that the Soviet nuclear and missile infrastructure will be sold component by component, and that Soviet experts in nuclear and missile production will find their way to dangerous programmes in the developing world."

Those experts are the key to proliferation because components or weapons cannot be sold, stolen, or smuggled without their collusion.

As Dr. Navias put it: "The problem is not one of proliferating warheads, but one of unemployed eggheads."

Paul Beaver, publisher of Jane's Defence Weekly, said the pool of Soviet scientists with first-hand knowledge of building nuclear weapons is so large — about 30,000 to 50,000 — that some inevitably will be lured away.

"There are going to be at least a dozen, if not a few hundred, who will see the potential of putting themselves on the market to Syria, India, Pakistan, China, Vietnam, Libya, North Korea, South American countries — you name it," he said in an interview.

Vyacheslav Rozanov of the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy said in Moscow last month that two Soviet scientists turned down salaries of 2,000 a month from Libya, but might say yes if offered more.

"If the choice is between starving or getting work in your field, then you must take the job," said Yuri Rogozhin, spokesman for the Russian nuclear safety agency, Gosatomnadzor.

A weapon and the technicians to launch it would be the biggest prize.

Mr. Beaver said the basics of a bomb factory — a small electronic laboratory, furnaces, centrifuge system, lead shielding and enriched uranium or plutonium — could be loaded into three or four trucks and driven out of the country.

Stan Norris, senior staff analyst with the Natural Resources Defence Council in Washington, said it would take "a lot of collusion" to export one of the estimated 30,000 Soviet nuclear weapons in one piece.

He said the weapons are numerous and Soviet security procedures appear to have remained in force.

Much more vulnerable to theft and smuggling are the roughly 15,000 weapons for destruction, which are to be dismantled into thousands of components.

The dismantling, which Russian scientists say will take 10 years, will leave behind 270 to 800 tonnes of highly enriched uranium and 120 tonnes of plutonium from the warheads, Mr. Norris said.

Aspiring nuclear powers usually try to build a basic bomb, which requires a relatively large amount of nuclear material and is clumsy to launch. Soviet technology offers the promise of the same nuclear "bang" with far less of the scarce uranium or plutonium.

Soviet scientists can miniaturise the trigger and detonator system and create little pellets of nuclear material that can be used in far smaller and more mobile weapon systems, Mr. Norris said.

One team with the right components could shorten the nuclear programme in an advanced country like Iran from years to months, he said.

Existing nuclear programmes like Pakistan's are much less likely to be made far more interesting by Soviet technology.

"Let's say Pakistan, which is a given amount of enriched uranium to make a bomb, and with some assistance, it could make 20," Mr. Norris said. "That's just an example."

Western experts are warning the proliferation of Soviet nuclear weapons technology, largely on a "sell-off" of information to countries in the republics.

The U.S. Congress has spent 400 million in 1991 to help speed the storage and destruction of Soviet nuclear weapons. It has also been suggesting that the West buy Soviet nuclear weapons.

Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher of Germany has proposed creating an international foundation to take care of unemployed Soviet nuclear experts.

NATO, Manfred Moerem, has suggested West not let the scientists or establish joint ventures with scientific organisations in the nuclear republics — Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus.

President Boris Yeltsin of Russia has denied any scientist have gone to work for Libya and said he would raise their pay to keep them at home.

Mr. Milhollin of the Wisconsin Project said the West must make clear to the nuclear republics "that the first big export they make to a dangerous country is going to torpedo their credibility in the West."

"I think that's the strongest deterrent," he said in an interview. "The West is not going to save their economies so they can proliferate nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles around the world, and they surely realise that."

THE PROFESSIONALS ALWAYS CHOOSE THE RELIABLE

PACKING, AIR FREIGHT FORWARDING, DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICES AND DELIVERIES. CUSTOMS CLEARANCE, TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS.

AMIN KAWAR & SONS
TEL: 604578 604596
P.O. Box 7806 AMMAN

CROWN INT'L EST.
Packing, shipping, forwarding, storage, clearing, door-to-door service
Air, Sea and Land

Agents all over the world
Tel: 664090
Fax: 690852
P.O. Box 926487 Amman

4 Rent & Sale
Many villas and apartments are available for rent and sale. Fully furnished or unfurnished.
Also many lots of land are available for sale.
For further details, please call
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 610605, 610609
Fax: 610520

STUDIO HAIG
Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:
• **JUMBO photo size 30% larger**
• **Free Metal Frame 13 x 18 cm**

Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank, Phone: 604042
Swedish tel: 823891

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO RENT IN WEST AMMAN

CALL SOHA AT

Saudi Real Estate 687821/22

RENT Distinctive
Villas Apartments Flats in ROYAL WEST AMMAN

real estate "R" US

Just call NIDAL 693037

For the best for you MONEY ADVERTISE in the

RESTAURANT CHINA

The first & best Chinese Restaurant in Jordan
1st Circle, Jabal Amman, near Ahliyah Girls School
Take away is available
Open daily 12:00-3:30 p.m.
7:00 — Midnight
Tel: 639868

PEKING RESTAURANT

AUTHENTIC CHINESE CUISINE
elegant colorful atmosphere moderate prices
reservations tel: 694030 (now open daily)

CHEN'S CHINESE RESTAURANT
Mecca Street, Yarmouk Engineers' Housing Estate, near Kilo Supermarket
Mongolian Barbecue for Lunch Friday only
Tel: 818214
Come and taste our specialities
Open daily 12:00 - 3:30 p.m.
6:30 - Midnight

MANDARIN RESTAURANT
Special Chinese Foods Skilled Chinese Chefs

Open 11:30-2:30 & 6:00-11:30 daily
Take away is available
Wadi Saqra Road near Philadelphia Hotel
Tel: 661922, Amman

Once Tasted Always Loved

CHINA RESTAURANT
AQABA
CHINESE FOOD

Open daily 12:00 - 15:00 & 18:30 - 23:30
Tel: 03 - 314415

The First Class Hotel in Amman that has a Kitchenette in every room...

DAROTEL
داروتيل

Amman - Tel: 688193
P.O. Box 9403 - Fax 602434
Telex 23888 DAROTEL JO
Ideal Residence For Expatriates and Businessmen

Jordan Times

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Winter Olympic Games

Austrian takes downhill title as favourites fail

VAL D'ISERE (R) — Big Austrian Patrick Ortlieb, who came to the Olympics without a major win, aced his more fancied rivals Sunday to capture the downhill gold medal, most treasured prize of the Winter Games.

Ortlieb, first away down the Bellevue Face Piste, set a time which remarkably resisted the challenge of all the rest as Austria, land of the great Franz Klammer, once again hailed an Olympic downhill champion.

Home hope Frank Piccard, roared on by thousands of French fans lining the track, came within a whisker of snatching the crown. But he still failed an Austrian one-two by swooping in for the silver ahead of Guenther Mader. The race was a disaster for the favourites. World champion Franz Heinzer was again denied an Olympic medal and strongly-tipped all-rounders Marc Girardelli and Paul Accola, failed to complete the course.

"It's an incredible feeling to win my first race at the Olympics. When Accola went out I couldn't believe it," 24-year-old Ortlieb said.

Ortlieb, whose father Guy was born in the Alsace region of France, achieved his feat on a track he did not favour, with all its exacting turns.

"I haven't changed my opinion of the track. It's not a downhill and I hope it's the last time the downhill is like that," he said.

"The whole thing was simply a little too slow."

The course, designed for the games by Swiss former Olympic downhill champion Bernhard Russi, was spectacular for spectators at the finish, who — unusually at a downhill — could see most of the race on the mountain

slope above.

But it was unpopular with traditional downhill racers.

Ortlieb clocked one minute 50.37 seconds in the race of his life down the twists and turns of the 3,048-metre track.

Piccard was just 0.05 of a second behind, adding a silver to the super-giant slalom gold and downhill bronze he won at the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

Mader, an experienced and versatile campaigner, celebrated his first Olympic medal by finishing a similar 0.05 behind the Frenchman — a mere 0.10 separated the top three.

"This is one of the greatest moments of my life," said Piccard, dogged this season by injury and poor results. "I'm elated after having such a bad season in downhill."

For Swiss fans, clanging their cow-bells and waving their flags, there was only despair. Race favourite Heinzer, winner of four of this season's six World Cup downhills, managed only sixth place and surprise package Accola fell.

Accola, Girardelli and Austria's 1980 Olympic downhill champion Leonhard Stock all came to grief at the pylon turn, a sharp right-hander a third of the way down the course.

Stock took out two gate posts as he lost control of his skis. Girardelli missed a gate and Accola, 27th starter and the last man with a real chance of denying Ortlieb, fell.

The long, nerve-shredding vigil at the finish was over for Ortlieb, who was hoisted in the air by Mader and a team official.

"The waiting at the Finish line was more difficult than the race itself," said Ortlieb, recalling

how his hopes of a World Cup win were foiled in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in January when Germany's Markus Wasmeier, starting way down at 38th, pipped him by 0.06.

Meanwhile, Katarina Witt is back at the Olympics, this time as a television commentator.

The two-time Olympic gold medalist debuts next week as the figure skating commentator on the American television network CBS-TV.

"I'm nervous," the 26-year-old former member of the east German Olympic team says with a slight laugh. "This is big. This is huge... It's not my language. Sometimes I may not be able to say what I want to say. Such a large audience is listening to me."

"I want to be good," she adds in nearly flawless English. "I want to do a good job."

Ms. Witt has witnessed a great upheaval in her homeland since the 1988 Calgary Olympics. When we last saw Mr. Witt there, she was the skating Carmen in red, a glamour girl who received thousands of love letters and silenced all of those cruel jokes about steroid pumped-up east German women.

At Calgary, she still paid tribute to the Communist state 'sport machine' for nurturing her talent and making her a champion.

Since then, the Berlin Wall has fallen, Germany has reunited and Katarina Witt is fast becoming a lady of capitalism, promoting Dansk, Dupont and Diet Coke. She toured with 1988 Olympic champion Brian Boitano and won an Emmy Award for Carmen On Ice.

German federation to probe Krabbe dope test

KARLSRUHE, Germany (R) — The German Athletic Federation (DLV) lifted its suspension on double world sprint champion Katrin Krabbe and two other runners Sunday and ordered an investigation into dope-testing irregularities.

The DLV suspended Krabbe, World Championship silver medalist Grit Breuer and former world champion Silke Moeller Friday after tests revealed their urine samples appeared to come from the same person.

But following a second analysis of the samples Sunday the DLV said they were tampered with and it was temporarily lifting its ban, allowing the women to compete in the German Indoor Championships here.

Dr. Manfred Donike, the doping expert who ran a second analysis of the urine samples, said earlier Sunday they had been tampered with.

"All three urine samples came from the same person, (but) I cannot say from whom," said Donike.

In a 24-page statement, the DLV said that as a result of a second analysis that showed the three urine samples came from the same person it was ordering an investigation into what had happened.

It said the second analysis "established that the urine samples of the athletes Breuer, Krabbe and Moeller were identical."

But the federation declined to give further details of the investigation, saying only that it would carry it out as quickly as possible.

The DLV said the athletes' suspension had been lifted pending the result of the investigation and they were free to compete. Breuer had won a court injunction Saturday against the suspension, allowing her to compete in the German Championships where she ran a year's best time of 23.03 seconds in a 200 metres heat.

All three athletes were suspended Friday until the results of the second tests, carried out by Donike Saturday, were known.

Although the three tests were negative, the International Amateur Athletic Federation's (IAAF) rules state that anyone trying to evade a drug test or found to have doctored a urine test is liable to the same suspension as an athlete found guilty of taking drugs.

Breuer's coach suggested Saturday that mistakes were made in the process of taking the samples at a training camp in South Africa last month.

South African athletics official Chris Hattingh told German Sports News Agency (SID) Sunday that the tests were carried out according to IAAF regulations



Katrin Krabbe

Courier takes No. 1 spot

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Jim Courier of the United States became the number one men's tennis player in the world when he beat fellow countryman Derrick Rostagno 4-6 6-3 6-2 in the semi-finals of the \$260,000 Volvo/San Francisco.

The victory ensures that he will overtake Sweden's Stefan Edberg in the ATP Tour weekly rankings Monday.

Second-seeded Michael Chang of the United States avoided a potential second set scare in his 6-0 7-5 win over fellow countryman Brad Gilbert to advance to the final against Courier at the 32-player, indoor tournament.

The 21-year-old Courier becomes the first American to hold the top since John McEnroe in August 1985, and only the third American, the other being Jimmy Connors, to hold the No. 1 spot since the ATP Tour initiated computer rankings in 1973.

"I feel really sober, like everything in my head has stopped. I thought there be a lot of adrenaline flowing, but I feel relaxed for the first time this week," Courier said.

"It can never be taken away from me — that I was No. 1 for one week. Hopefully, I'll be there for a while."

The combination of Courier taking over number one ranking

and there being four American semifinalists for only the third time in the last 168 tour events underscores the strength of American tennis.

Courier, who recently won his second Grand Slam title at the 1992 Australian Open, scored, come-from-behind wins in two matches this week, so he was not distracted when he dropped the first set against Rostagno.

Courier began to find holes in Rostagno's attacking game and took advantage of his opponent's low first serve percentage in the second set. When he broke Rostagno with a forehand winner in the first game of the second set, he appeared in total control.

In the final game of the match, Rostagno turned back triple match point, but Courier buckled down and ended the match with a perfectly executed backhand volley winner.

Chang, who used passing shots to stifle Gilbert's creative net-rushing, was asked to compare Courier's accomplishment with his own of becoming the first American since 1955 to win the French Open in 1989.

"There are certain pressures that go with winning a Grand Slam title very young, of becoming No. 1, and this generation of American players is learning to handle those," Chang said.

Seles beats Fernandez in German tennis final

ESSEN, Germany (R) — World number one Monica Seles won her third Essen Grand Prix Tennis Championship in four years Sunday when she blew away Mary Joe Fernandez 6-0, 6-3 in just 54 minutes.

Second seed Fernandez, who

had won only one of their previous 12 encounters and who lost to Seles in the Australian Open final last month, never got into the match. The American lost the first set in just 21 minutes.

Seles won the tournament last year and in 1989.

Keegan hailed as saviour by fans as Newcastle United wins

LONDON (R) — Newcastle United fans, hailing Kevin Keegan's arrival as manager as the second coming of St. Kevin, witnessed the beginning of what they hope will be the miracle cure for their ailing club.

The north eastern city, whose supporters are arguably the most passionate in England, has been buzzing ever since Keegan's appointment was revealed at a press conference Wednesday.

The local newspapers ran headlines "King Kevin" and "St. Kevin to the rescue" the most faithful besieged the club for tickets as the deepening despair turned instantly to renewed hope.

And on Saturday 29,263 fans, the largest second division crowd this season, saw Newcastle beat Bristol City 3-0 to register their first win in seven games and only their second in the last 13.

"I feel elated," said former Liverpool and England international Keegan after his first match as a manager.

Keegan replaced Ossie Ardiles three days after the Argentine was told his job was safe.

When Newcastle Chairman Sir John Hall enticed Keegan to take the reins at his former club he also set out the burden of the challenge facing the soccer millionaire who is their sixth mana-

ger in eight years.

"If Newcastle go down this season the club will be dead," he said.

One local paper described his appointment as the greatest gamble in the club's history.

Newcastle, a club steeped in history with four first division titles and six F.A. Cup triumphs, returned to the second division in 1989 and face the humiliation of relegation to the third division for the first time.

They are weighed down by debts estimated at \$4 million (\$7.2 million) and until Saturday's victory were second from bottom. Last week they lost 5-2 at bottom club Oxford.

But both club and fans believe Keegan, returning to the Tyneside club where he spent two years as a player and helped into the first division in 1984, will save them from relegation and lead them back to the promised land — the premier division.

Keegan, 40, who won the European Cup with both Liverpool and Hamburg, was twice European Footballer of the Year and was capped 63 times by England, began the long haul with three precious points which lifted them to third-from-bottom.

"I don't think there's too much wrong at this club," he said after

his young side saw Bristol with three goals in eight minutes in the second half.

Before the game he emerged to a hero's welcome from the St. James Park crowd who had been chanting for him to appear for more than half an hour.

They believe he will honour his words made after his appointment. "We'll turn this club around. It will go back where it belongs."

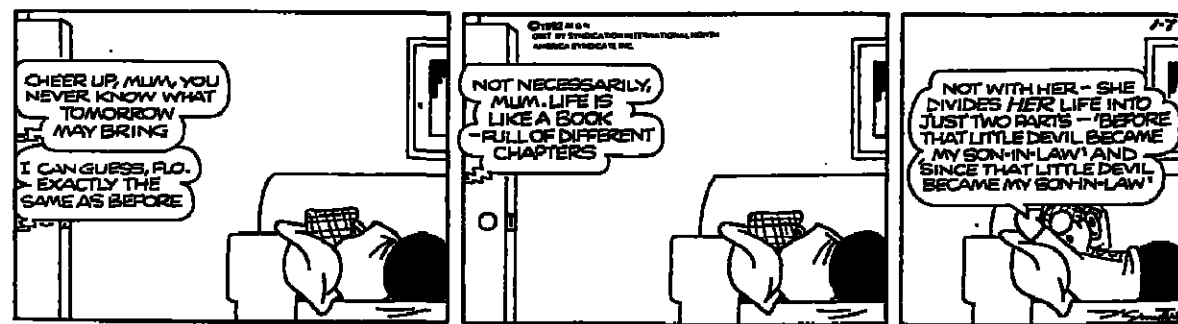
Keegan's first stop towards success was an act of cleansing — not of Newcastle's sins, but the grub by bath and toilets at the training ground.

"Little things can make a big difference to morale," he said.

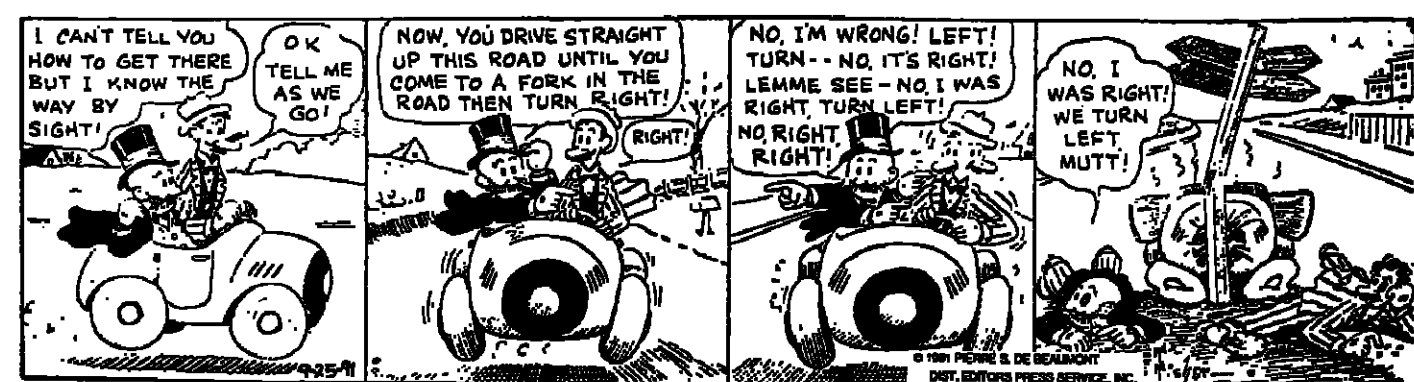
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY 10, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Continue to state your point of view to others but continue to use tact and charm so that your associates won't get the idea that you are trying to rule the roost. Follow good suggestions.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are anxious to be off to some new interests and schools of thought but you would be wise to stick to what you have already successfully started.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make a special point today to continue with your tasks the way you have already placed in motion, otherwise change could produce wrong results.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A pleasant time you have planned can be changed by poor judgment or through a surprise condition so go along with it and don't pout over it.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A limiting condition can seem to be a disaster but it is actually an opportunity giving you a chance to make a particular use of an aptitude.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are pressured to take some chance or risk today but if you do you will certainly regret it later on so study all phases of your desire.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Utilize as much as you possibly can to establish more harmony at

your residence and show you are considerate of your family wishes and desires.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You want to make a dramatic change in what you believe and accept new principles and precepts but don't be hasty or you will make wrong choices.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A day when you want to start right in today to do something of a drastic nature where your finances and practical affairs are involved.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You feel that you can no longer put up with some personal conditions as they now exist but be wary of changes today as judgment is too good.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You start the day trying to remove some private concerns that have gotten under your skin but you can act in too adverse a manner to do any good.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You feel like seeing and being with many companions today, and you are apt to make choices which will not be to your best interests so stop and think.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You are tempted to get into the world of outside activity and make headway at your vocational duties but you need to doublecheck your wishes carefully before taking action.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

TEWCI

FYNAC

LAPEAT

REHIFE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

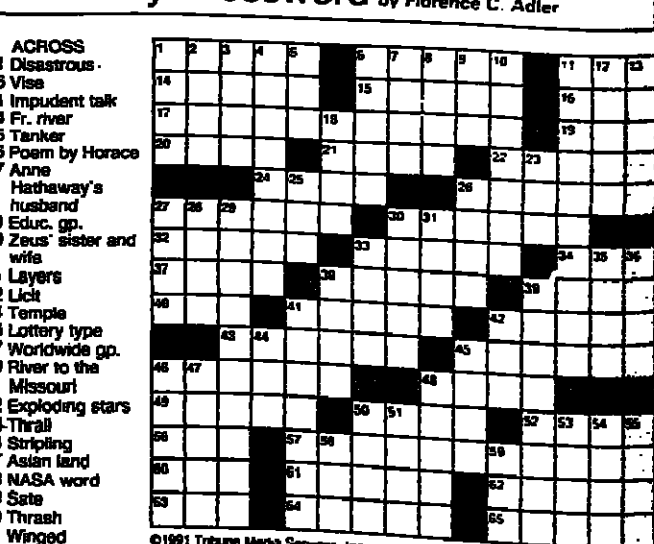
Answer here:

Saturday's Jumbles: SCOUT CATCH HEALTH PUNDT

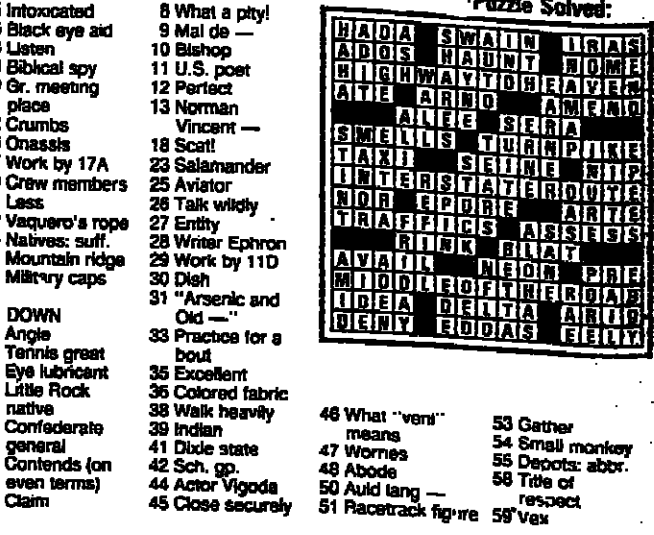
Answer: He's been on a diet for weeks and all he's taken off is this — HIS HAT

THE Daily Crossword

by Florence C. Adler



©1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Financial Markets
Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 3-February 7, 1992)

AMMAN — Market focus shifted back during last week towards the dollar/mark short-term interest rate differentials, as expectations faded of a near term German credit policy easing. Dollar exchange rates thus declined gradually throughout last week's trading sessions. Poor U.S. employment results took the dollar an average of 3.21 per cent against European currencies at the end of the week and only marginally lower against the yen.

The mark rallied against the dollar and other major currencies for the first three days of the week, on news Monday of a 6.4 per cent pay raise settlement for the German steel workers.

As the news filtered through, market attention refocused on the dollar/mark interest rate differential, which returned in favour of the latter. The majority believed that the high wage settlement would oblige the Bundesbank to keep interest rates high to counter inflationary pressures. Meanwhile, the Fed's chairman did not rule out the possibility of a further interest rate cut if deemed necessary. He said that he believed that the past rate cuts during 1991 were sufficient to push the economic recovery in the U.S. forward.

Against the yen, the dollar fluctuated as traders were conscious of the possibility of a central bank intervention to support the yen as the dollar flirted around the 126 yen level.

The U.S. unit accelerated its descent against the mark Thursday. In the Far East, the governor of the Bank of Japan was reported to have expressed doubts that a full scale American recovery would materialise in the second half of 1992. His statement triggered a wave of dollar sell-off, which intensified as the dollar breached several support levels the last being 1.5750 marks to the dollar. Comments by the Bundesbank president in the Wall Street Journal ruling out a near term interest rate cut further bolstered the mark.

Friday took the dollar sharply lower against European currencies, although only marginally lower against the yen, thus finishing at its lowest exchange levels of the week.

The dollar's plunge followed the release of a 91,000 decline in January's U.S. Non-payrolls, and December's revised gain to a mere 3,000, as opposed to the 31,000 previously declared. Although forecasts had been widely indecisive due to the impact of seasonal adjustments, the employment results were far below the worst scenario.

Many market participants reflected that the negative results extinguished all hopes of a premature U.S. economic recovery, which had underpinned the dollar's unexpected surge during last month.

Long-term dollar sentiment remained positive as forecasts still pointed to a U.S. economic recovery towards midyear, while its German counterpart slows down.

Commercial demand for the dollar from Japanese corporations prevented the U.S. unit from falling further against the yen, as did the yen's fall against the mark, which closed at 80.44 yen to the mark compared to 78.06 yen last week.

Friday's poor U.S. data revived expectations for a new interest rate cut by the Fed during the next two weeks. Economists pointed out, however, that the recent strength in money growth faces the Fed with a dilemma of cutting interest rates, which would risk a further drop in dollar exchange rates against EMS currencies is not expected this week. Observers expect 1.55 marks to the dollar to form a strong support level, the breach of which, however, would take the dollar to 1.5030 marks.

GCC official attacks proposed EC energy tax

ABU DHABI (R) — A senior Gulf official has lashed out at the European Community (EC) for considering an energy tax that would add \$10 to the price of a barrel of crude oil by the year 2000.

Abdullah Al Quwaiz, associate secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), told a business conference the tax, meant to limit pollution, would be ineffective, harm the world economy and discourage the search for more crude oil reserves.

It was also not in keeping with the spirit of a cooperation agreement being negotiated between the EC and the six-nation GCC, which groups Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, he added.

An EC official attending the conference organised by the London-based weekly Middle East Economic Digest said EC energy and environment ministers strongly favoured the tax at a meeting in December.

But Eberhard Rhein, in charge of relations with the region at the EC commission in Brussels, told Reuters it had yet to respond to the ministers' request.

He could not say whether the commission would endorse the plan and come up with a proposal along the lines suggested.

Mr. Quwaiz said OPEC esti-

mated the tax would cut its members' revenues by some \$14 billion a year.

"Because of the adverse impact of these taxes on the economies of consuming countries, and because many specialists raised questions regarding the effectiveness of these proposed taxes, it is not expected that other countries would follow the example of the EC," he pointed out.

"To see the overall impact on the environment of our planet is questionable," he said.

Mr. Rhein said that the EC proposal would tax the community's coal infinitely more than oil. The coal industry was fighting it vigorously, he added.

Mr. Quwaiz said the oil industry needed to invest heavily over the coming three years in expanding capacity and to satisfy new legal requirements and pollution laws in the United States, Europe and Japan.

"The industry may invest in expanded capacity only to find that demand has been adversely hit by the new environmental taxes and regulations," he said.

Another conference speaker, Rashid Al Suwaidi of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, said OPEC countries will have to invest \$120 billion by 1995 to renew production facilities if they were to meet anticipated call on OPEC oil.

Consumer credit in U.S. shows first annual decline in 33 years

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumer credit plunged at an annual rate of 2.8 per cent in December, contributing to the first annual decline in installment debt in 33 years, the government has said.

It was the latest sign that consumers were unloading mountains of debt, blamed in part for the recession, faster than they were taking on new loans.

The Federal Reserve said consumer credit dropped a seasonally adjusted \$1.7 billion to \$728.4 billion as the year ended. That was down 1.0 per cent from 1990 and the first decrease since a 0.5 per cent decline in 1958.

The report also showed the pace of borrowing was even slower in October and November than previously thought. It revised an October increase from 2.7 per cent down to 1.9 per cent and said November credit was off 0.3 per cent rather than unchanged.

All major types of installment credit posted declines in December, including automobile loans which have fallen every month last year. Automakers have reported 1991 sales were the worst since 1983 when the economy was emerging from the previous recession.

Even revolving credit, which includes credit cards, was off despite the holiday shopping season. Many retailers had said sales

in December were a disappointment.

Consumer credit includes all consumer loans except mortgages and home equity loans. It helps finance much of overall consumer spending, which represents two-thirds of the nation's economic activity.

Installment debt had risen 8.8 per cent in 1988 and 8.3 per cent in 1989 before slowing to a 2.3 per cent gain in 1990 as the economy entered the recession.

Except for the 1957-58 recession, consumer credit continued to rise during post-World War II downturns. Growth peaked during the 1980's at 19.96 per cent in 1984.

Government and private economists have said high consumer and business debt contributed to the current recession.

Car loans were down at an annual rate of 3.1 per cent, or a seasonally adjusted \$689 million, slower than the 8.4 per cent plunge in November.

Meanwhile, though loan delinquencies showed signs of leveling off last quarter, some analysts warn that banks face another round of trouble ahead.

The effect of thousands of workers losing jobs in large corporations last fall hasn't yet showed up on banks' balance sheets.

There's likely to be a dramatic

impact on consumers' ability to repay credit card and auto loans, forcing banks to set aside still more cash to cover rising delinquencies.

"I think there is a second down leg this industry has to face," said Charles Peabody, bank analyst and partner at East Shore Partners in Springfield, New Jersey.

Mr. Peabody said the signs of stability on banks' balance sheets in the fourth quarter reflects the economy last summer, but not the continued downturn in November and December.

Between September and December, the nation's factories lost between 30,000 to 40,000 jobs a month, Bureau of Labour Statistics figures show.

"There is a lag between what we perceive and what is reported on a bank's balance sheet," said Mr. Peabody.

Carol Berger, bank analyst for C.J. Lawrence Inc., also was skeptical about the apparent moderation of delinquent loans.

"I still think the school's out," she said. "One quarter does not make a trend."

Bank stocks have gained in recent weeks, based on the assumption that lower interest rates will help earnings and loan losses aren't escalating as fast as in 1990. In many cases, banks are seeing problem loans reach a plateau.

Citicorp, the nation's largest bank, said delinquent loans fell two per cent in the fourth quarter to \$9.73 billion from the year-earlier period.

Bankers have been cautiously hopeful the trend will continue. Michael Esposito, chief financial officer for Chase Manhattan Corp., said the bank reported \$3.37 billion in delinquent loans and foreclosed property, the "first decline we have seen in six quarters."

"We're encouraged. We are seeing some peaking in those numbers," Mr. Esposito told analysts recently. That figure excluded Third World loans, which are declining for many banks.

But Mr. Peabody said the trend doesn't warrant the current run-up in bank stock prices. In the past four weeks, an index of 50 bank stocks followed by Salomon Brothers rose 10 per cent, while the Standard and Poor's index of 500 stocks rose less than half that amount.

"I think what people are doing is they are extrapolating a slowing in deterioration into an improvement," said Mr. Peabody.

Richard Stillinger, senior vice president for Keefe Bruyette and Woods, a brokerage firm that specialises in banks, said the levelling of commercial real estate loan delinquencies probably will more than offset a possible gain in consumer loan defaults.

'Yeltsin is Judas,' 'Yeltsin must resign' thousands chant in streets of Moscow

MOSCOW (R) — Thousands of people marched through central Moscow Sunday to protest against Russia's radical market reforms and denounce President Boris Yeltsin as a traitor to the working class.

"Yeltsin is Judas" and "Yeltsin must resign," chanted the crowd of 10,000 as it made its way from Gorky Park to Manezh Square, close to the Kremlin.

In contrast, pro-Yeltsin forces gathered in front of the Russian White House, seat of government and the rallying point for resistance to last August's coup attempt by hardliners.

Speakers warned the crowd of 10,000 Yeltsin supporters of what they called the danger of a "red-brown horde" of communists and fascists.

"The spectre of communism is again haunting our country," said one speaker, in a parody of Karl Marx.

The anti-Yeltsin marchers, called out by the conservative "Working Russia" movement, carried the hammer-and-sickle flag of the former Soviet Union as well as the old blue-and-red flag of Soviet Russia.

"Menu for today: Tea without sugar, soup without meat, porridge without butter," read one placard.

"You can't go back to capitalism without violence," read another, quoting Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Soviet state.

The angry slogans of Moscow's anti-Yeltsin marchers reflected the frustration many Russians are feeling after five weeks of economic shock therapy, imposed by the government in a bid to create a market system as quickly as possible.

ITAR-TASS news agency said smaller rallies against the government were held in the Siberian cities of Novosibirsk and Angarsk.

The capital put 10,000 militiamen on duty and officials said they would deal "ruthlessly" with troublemakers at the first big demonstrations since price reforms sent the cost of living spir-

alling upwards last month.

A white car blaring a World War II anthem, "rise up, great country," led the protest procession, watched by militiamen backed by heavy trucks.

Members of the mainly middle-aged crowd locked hands as they walked along Moscow's ring road, before police herded them down a side street towards Manezh Square.

"We came here to rouse the people against Yeltsin," said Svetlana Bondareva, 52, a badge portraying Josef Stalin and other Soviet leaders pinned to her jacket.

"When all working people are united we will organise a national strike," she said.

Mr. Yeltsin's vice-president Alexander Rusokoi, emerging as a leader of conservative opposition, accused the government Saturday of pursuing a policy of "economic genocide."

He called for the imposition for an economic state of emergency, saying the alternative was a new Bolshevik revolution.

"A social explosion may happen and, God forbid, those who came to power in 1917 may do so again," he told the inaugural meeting of a new conservative group, the Congress of Civic and Patriotic Forces of Russia.

Critics say the freeing of prices last month has impoverished ordinary people while giving monopolies free rein to charge exorbitant rates.

Mr. Yeltsin's economic chief Yegor Gaidar said reform was starting to bear fruit and producers were realising they must lower their prices where necessary to meet reduced demand.

"According to our estimates, in about two years the light in the tunnel will appear," he told the French newspaper Le Figaro in an interview quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency.

Russia last week outlined plans to sell off 25 per cent of state-owned enterprises by the end of 1992, but foreign investment will remain tightly controlled while the rouble remains weak.

Anatoly Chubais, minister in charge of the Russian government's privatisation programme, said restrictions on foreign investment were needed to prevent outsiders buying up vast chunks of the Russian economy for a pittance.

"To our great regret we are introducing administrative limitations on foreign investment and we will continue to do that while the (dollar) exchange rate is very high," Mr. Chubais told a news conference.

"Otherwise we would end up with a situation where a shop in Moscow would cost about \$1,000," he said.

He did not detail the planned limits.

Russian officials have described privatisation as the second key plank of their economic reform programme following the abrupt liberalisation of prices on Jan. 2.

That move sent prices spiraling out of the reach of millions of ordinary people, leading to complaints that the country had been wrong to free prices without selling off state firms and dismantling state monopolies at the same time.

But Mr. Chubais said the programme would move quickly now.

"The preparatory work is over and from February we are beginning a wide-ranging process of privatisation," he said, adding that it could take 10 or 15 years to break up state monopolies.

Russia plans a series of auctions and competitive tenders for firms, shops and other service industries, a plan which contrasts sharply with a Ukrainian idea to give state firms away to local residents holding special free certificates.

But Mr. Chubais said Russia's privatisation programme would be based on sales not on giving things away.

"We believe if you get something for free you will not work hard to keep it," he said.

One quarter of firms would probably be sold off this year, although in the service sector this could rise to 70 per cent.

Mr. Chubais said the government expected to raise 92 billion roubles through this year's privatisation. Revenues would rise sharply thereafter, reaching up to 500 billion roubles by 1994.

Ninety two billion roubles is worth about \$840 million at the Russian central bank's market rate of 110 roubles per dollar, but \$590 million at current auction rates of about 170 roubles per dollar.

The auction rate is available to a limited number of banks and firms at auctions conducted mostly by commercial banks.

Russian officials, including economic strategist Yegor Gaidar, have made no secret at their displeasure at current rates, arguing that the auction rate is unrealistic.

Officials expect the central bank to step into the auction market soon, selling dollars to drive the exchange rate down.

They see the next stage as an international stabilisation fund for the rouble, a measure which Mr. Chubais hoped could be agreed in May or June.

"I hope that a stabilisation programme will mean the exchange rate of the rouble rises to 30 or 35 roubles per dollar," he said.

Mr. Chubais said Russia's privatisation programme would affect most of the economy,

although 23 branches would be excluded from the initial sell-off. He said there was no reason why most of the defence sector could not be sold off eventually.

A 25 per cent stake in each firm would be offered to workers, who also would have the opportunity to acquire 10 per cent of the remaining shares at a special price.

Previous privatisation efforts, which brought in just two billion roubles last year, had been virtual theft, he said.

In another area, leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States have agreed that Russia would pay most republic's share of the Soviet Union's \$70 billion foreign debt.

ITAR-TASS news agency said Ukraine, which wants to pay its own share separately, did not agree. But the report did not make clear whether the Ukrainian delegation had voted against or abstained.

The Ukrainian delegation, attending without Prime Minister Vitold Fokin, had said it was not empowered to take any decisions on economic matters.

But ITAR-TASS quoted Mr. Gaidar as saying his republic would not object if Ukraine negotiated its debt repayments separately.

The two republics are the strongest members of the new Commonwealth.

ITAR-TASS said the delegations had agreed "the Russian Federation will act as the successor and guarantor of foreign credit arrangements of the Commonwealth member states and the republic of Georgia."

Georgia has yet to join the Commonwealth.

Bank urges public-private effort on environment

BANGKOK (R) — A senior World Bank official told the countries of east Asia that sustainable economic growth in the region depended on conservation of the environment.

Gautam Kaji, the bank's Washington-based vice president for east Asia and Pacific region called on governments to seek help from their private sectors for the costly task.

"East Asian development will increasingly be defined by environmental needs," Mr. Kaji told an international conference.

The bank has estimated that east Asian nations might need to spend as much as \$20 billion a year for environment related investment in this decade.

"Governments cannot do this alone partnership with the private sector is needed," Mr. Kaji told the meeting organised by the International Herald Tribune and Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), a private think-tank.

He said the bank was giving more funding to environmental projects, planning to support 40 such projects with a total value of \$4.3 billion in the next four years.

The World Bank allocated about 10 per cent of its lending to "core environment projects" last year. In 1992 it planned to in-

crease the proportion to about 15 per cent of total east Asia lending and about 20 per cent in 1993, he said.

"I want to emphasise that every project we support, whether for environmental improvement or not, must undergo a rigorous process of environmental review and assessment, so that specific environmental impacts are determined, design options and costs considered and mitigation actions incorporated," Mr. Kaji said.

He said the World Bank would be ready to provide financial and technical support for any project that linked efforts of the government and the private sector in cleaning up the environment.

"We want to be at the forefront of policy and technical innovation and perform a major supporting role for the forging of private-public partnership," he said.

But the bank was opposed to any environmental policies that slowed economic growth, set punitive regulations that over-controlled industries, and ignored the economics of environmental costs and benefits, he said.

East Asia averaged almost 13 per cent annual growth in manufacturing output during the 1980s. "A decade considered 'lost' for most of the developing world,"

Mr. Kaji said.

"With a growth rate of over seven per cent year over the past three decades, east Asia has made more progress than any other region in reducing poverty and all its attendant environmental ills," Mr. Kaji said.

He cited Thailand's proposed industrial environment fund for hazardous waste disposal as an example of what role the private sector can play in conservation.

Under the programme, factories would be required to deposit waste disposal fees for the entire year in advance with the fund with a matching bond or guarantee, the bond would be progressively returned to the company as it delivered waste to a treatment facility.

"Business participation, innovation and expertise applied to large infrastructural programmes will undoubtedly play a vital role in overcoming a range of urban environmental problems," TDRI's Dhira Phantumvanit said.

Urban problems in the Asia and Pacific region have created a vast potential market for firms geared to supply environment-friendly products and services, said Mr. Dhira, director of the TDRI's natural resources and environment programme.

Mandela warns foreign banks on loans

JOHANNESBURG (R) — African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela said Saturday his organisation was opposed to foreign loans to South Africa before all economic sanctions against the white government were lifted.

Mr. Mandela said a future non-racial government would be obliged to repay debts incurred before Western governments imposed sanctions in 1986. He stopped short of giving a similar assurance on recent loans.

The ANC, for whom sanctions are seen as a major bargaining chip, is negotiating a post-apartheid constitution with the government and other groups.

"The ANC accepts, as a general policy, that a future democratic state has an obligation to pay foreign debts which were incurred by the present regime... before financial sanctions were imposed by the international community," Mr. Mandela said in a statement.

"What is totally unacceptable to us (the ANC) is the attempt by the South African regime, acting in concert with certain foreign financial institutions, to bust financial sanctions adopted by the international community," the statement added.

Pretoria Friday chalked up a victory in its struggle for acceptance by investors abroad with the successful launch of a mark-denominated bond in Frankfurt by the state-controlled Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Investor appetite was so great that the issuer decided to raise the amount to 200 million marks (\$127 million) from 150 million (\$95 million).

The government returned to world capital markets last September.

"We therefore want to reiterate that the ANC is opposed to any bond issues currently being launched by the international capital markets," Mr. Mandela said. "In terms of our sanctions policy, sanctions will be lifted — with the exception of the oil and arms embargo — when an interim government of national unity has been installed."

"If these institutions lend money to the apartheid regime now, they will in fact be acting to delay our forward march to freedom, democracy and development," Mr. Mandela said.

Cinema Tel: 677420

CONCORD

Laila Alawi/Hisham Salim
in
Ya Mahallabia Ya

Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571

Nabil Al Mashini Theatre

Every day starting from Thursday Feb. 13.
You meet the stars of Haret Abu Awwad
Family in their play:

Zaman Al Shaklabah
(Somersault Time)

at 8 p.m.
Tickets office open daily

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

Patrick Swayze
in
ROADHOUSE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Special shows for children on Thursdays
and Fridays at 11:30 a.m.

The Fox And The Hound

Cinema Tel: 625155

RAINBOW

Noor Al Sharif
in
Naji Al Ali

Arabic

Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

CIS leaders leave crucial issues undecided

MOSCOW (AP) — A defiant Ukraine sent only a low-ranking official to a meeting Saturday of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) government leaders, and they failed to reach agreement on pressing economic and military issues for the young association.

Instead, the 11 members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed a series of accords on cooperation in the field of electric energy, ecology and transport rates, said Russian Deputy Prime Minister Gennady Burbulis.

Mr. Burbulis said all Commonwealth members but Ukraine agreed Saturday that Russia would act as a guarantor for all future transactions by the Commonwealth involving foreign credit agreements.

"There were three questions which touched upon the basic, fundamental principles of our economic activity and economic reform. After a long debate, it was decided that further work is needed," he said.

Mr. Burbulis said the three problem areas were centralised purchase of food, agricultural products and other goods through foreign credits; the permissible level of profitability at various republic factories; and regulated delivery of goods among commonwealth members.

But the 11 failed to reach any agreement on these issues, as well as on the problem of how to finance the Commonwealth's armed forces.

The economic and military questions are proving difficult for the young Commonwealth to solve, with members pursuing their own economic policies and wanting to form their own armies. The biggest differences have been between Russia and Ukraine, the two most powerful of the 11 former Soviet republics

that comprise the Commonwealth.

The 11-point agenda for the Commonwealth meeting also included the issue of military funding for the first quarter of 1992. Mr. Burbulis said Defence ministers of the Commonwealth states will meet next week to debate "the concept of Commonwealth Armed Forces" and decide on how to classify various types of units and weapons. After that, finance ministers will debate the question of funding.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to finance the vast army of the former Soviet Union, and its current budget allocates 50 billion rubles (\$500 million) for the armed forces, Mr. Burbulis said.

"This is a great load for Russia. We would like other Commonwealth states to participate," Mr. Burbulis said. "Belarus, Kazakhstan and others are ready but they are just demanding that the appropriate level of their participation be determined."

The agreements signed at the seven-hour, closed meeting included:

— Creation of an interstate ecological council and of a joint ecological fund; forming an interstate council on meteorology and on electric energy usage;

— An accord on free movement of goods on Commonwealth territory;

— An agreement on joint transportation tariffs: Prices for cargo transport will rise by 8.3 times compared with 1991, and prices of passenger transport will go up three times.

Although Saturday's negotiations were supposed to be attended by heads of government, or their deputies, Ukraine sent its deputy economic minister, Anatoly Rohansky.

Ukraine did not sign any of the

documents because its delegation was not authorised to do so, and it was relegated to observer status. But Mr. Burbulis said Ukraine approved the documents and is ready to add its signature within a few days.

Ukraine has adopted a separate policy at previous Commonwealth meetings, raising questions whether it sees its membership as only temporary.

The Ukrainian gesture apparently resulted from its dispute with Russia over the future of the Crimean peninsula and the Black Sea Fleet, which Ukraine claims for itself.

There was agitated debate over the level of representation. "It was quite heated," said participant Alexei Yablokov, a Russian government adviser.

Belarus Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich wanted to leave and said the meeting reminded him of the "agonies" of former President Mikhail Gorbachev when talks were attended by "whoever likes it," some participants reported.

Ukrainian delegation spokesman Vadim Dolganov said Ukrainian Prime Minister Vitold Fokin could not attend because he was giving a report to the parliament in Kiev.

Mr. Burbulis, asked about the incident, said it was only "an unfortunate coincidence of the timing of our meeting and the complications faced by the Ukrainian government."

The meeting was a prelude to a gathering of Commonwealth presidents and leaders scheduled to be held in the Belarus capital of Minsk on Feb. 14.

Georgia, which is not a Commonwealth member, was present Saturday as an observer. It was represented by its acting Prime Minister, Tengiz Sigua.

Doubts cloud start of CIS aid airlift

MOSCOW (R) — U.S. military planes start flying food and medicines to the former Soviet Union Monday, but both Russian and Western experts suggest the symbolic "Operation Provide Hope" is wasting money better spent elsewhere.

Billed as a dramatic end to decades of cold war hostilities by helping the United States' former enemy through a winter of shortages, the airlift will bring 54 planeloads of goods into the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Moscow officials recognise the flights will focus attention on their problems. But many doubt whether a high-profile airborne operation will give the country the help it needs.

"It will just be a symbolic measure," Russian aid coordinator Alexander Zhitnikov told Reuters. "In future we need substantial quantities of foodstuffs and medicine arriving by surface transport or by sea."

An airlift was a political gesture, arranged for television cameras, he said. "It is not even quicker than other methods if you are moving large quantities of goods."

European Community (EC) officials in Moscow took a similar line.

"Even with a Jumbo jet you have still only got some 100 tonnes of aid and we plan to bring in 150,000 tonnes," Michael Emerson, head of the European Commission delegation in Moscow, said.

President Boris Yeltsin has led Russian officials in calling for urgent Western aid to underpin an ambitious economic reform programme, stage off strikes and demonstrations and prevent the country from lurching back into dictatorship.

"The delay in the international community's aid to Russia is becoming dangerous," Mr. Yeltsin said in Paris Thursday. "It must be understood that if Russia fails in its reforms, dictatorship will appear."

The project will bring in nearly 18,000 tonnes of supplies left over from the Gulf War. "It is going to be an initial help in getting them through the winter and ... to get the stuff in there and to get it in quickly, an airlift is the way to go," said Pentagon spokesman Sam Grizzle.

The airlift is part of a \$650-million aid package proposed by the United States after an international conference in Washington last month.

But Mr. Zhitnikov said shipping aid by air was an expensive way of sending goods to a vast country like Russia.

Russian calculations showed that air freight costs could be some 20 times higher than surface costs, adding \$2 to the cost of a kilogramme (two pounds) of beef.

"We can buy a kilo of beef on the world market for a dollar, but to send it here by air costs another two dollars," he said.

Support for Serb rebels in Croatia crumbling

BELGRADE (R) — Grass-roots politicians in a rebel Serb enclave in Croatia were expected Sunday to back a United Nations plan to send peacekeeping forces to Yugoslavia despite opposition of their leaders to the proposal.

Milan Paspalj, president of the parliament in the Serb-controlled enclave of Krajina in Croatia, summoned deputies to a special session believed likely to back the deployment of up to 10,000 peacekeeping troops in Croatia.

"Of the two options — war or peace — we have chosen the second," Mr. Paspalj told the Belgrade daily Vecernje Novosti.

"We consider the guarantees given to the people of Krajina by the Yugoslav army, the federal army and U.N. representatives to be sufficient for us to accept the plan."

Support for the plan from the deputies would leave Krajina's President Milan Babic and his government isolated in their mountain stronghold of Knin, the area's capital.

Mr. Babic opposes the U.N. plan because he fears that replacing the Yugoslav army in Krajina with U.N. troops and disarming local Serbs would leave them at the mercy of Croatian forces.

Diplomats at the United Nations in New York said last week that Mr. Babic was the last remaining obstacle to the deployment of forces they hope will end seven months of fighting since Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia.

U.N. Security Council members urged all warring sides in a resolution passed Friday to give their unqualified support to U.N. peace proposals.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman has pledged his unconditional backing though officials in the Croatian capital, Zagreb, said minor problems of interpretation still remained.

Yugoslav and Serbian leaders have told the United Nations they will guarantee conditions for the deployment of peacekeeping but

failed to win Mr. Babic's backing in marathon talks last weekend. One of those conditions, a ceasefire between Croatian militia and Serb irregulars fighting with the Yugoslav army, has held for five weeks despite minor violations.

Croatian radio Sunday reported shelling around the eastern Croatian city of Osijek and said Gaspic in western Croatia came under fire from anti-aircraft guns.

Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said Croatian forces fired mortars at a school in the village of Gornji Zemunki, near the Adriatic port of Zadar Saturday but none of the 24 pupils in the building was injured.

More than 6,000 people have been killed in fighting since Croatia declared independence in June and Serbs in Croatia rebelled.

In signs of growing dissent inside Krajina, a crescent-shaped region south and east of Zadar, leaders of local communes issued a statement Saturday dissociating themselves from Mr. Babic. They said they backed the U.N. plan.

"We are faced with the self-will of an individual who should nominally express the will of the majority, but is working in his own personal interests," said the statement issued by 15 out of 16 commune leaders. The 16th, from Knin, did not attend their meeting.

"Milan Babic from this moment can represent only himself and, possibly, part of the commune of Knin," Bosko Bozanic, leader of Kolenica Commune in central Krajina, said.

Mr. Paspalj summoned the special assembly to the town of Glin, 230 kilometres north of Knin. A Krajina government advisor said the meeting was unconstitutional.

Krajina's army-controlled local territorial defence authorities, sensing possible unrest in the region, Friday banned mass gatherings.

At least 28 killed in Senegal air crash

DAKAR (R) — At least 28 people were killed Sunday when a tourist aircraft chartered by the French holiday firm Club Mediterranee crashed in Senegal. "Our latest information shows that 28 people died," Club Mediterranee spokeswoman Constance Nora said in Paris.

Senegalese radio earlier reported 30 deaths and 25 injured when the aircraft, on its way from Dakar to the Club Mediterranee resort of Cap Skirring, crashed at about 5 a.m. (0500 GMT) near Kafoutine, about 220 kilometres south of the capital.

Two of the passengers were Belgian and the rest French, Ms. Nora said. She said there were 56 on board including six crew, but another senior Club Mediterranee spokesman told French Radio a total of 58 were aboard the aircraft.

Airport sources in Dakar said the crew were American. Firemen in the southern town of Ziguinchor, contacted by telephone from Dakar, said three people survived the crash unhurt. The injured were taken to hospital in Ziguinchor.

Club Mediterranee said the aircraft was a Hawker Siddeley HS-74, a model regularly chartered by the company. Senegal Radio earlier said the plane was a Fokker chartered through Air Senegal from the private Gambian company Gamcrest.

Senegalese and French troops were helping with the relief operation, it said.

It was not clear how the crash occurred. The plane took off from Dakar at 4:30 a.m. (0430 GMT) on a flight due to last 45 minutes.

Serge Trigano, brother of Club Mediterranee Chairman Gilbert Trigano, told French Radio it took several hours to locate the wreck after contact was lost.

Sexy Swan Lake earns royal approval

LONDON (R) — A ballet company said it won royal approval from Princess Margaret, Queen Elizabeth's sister, for a sexy new British production of Swan Lake.

A curious public had snapped up tickets for the first night at Leeds in northern England after a newspaper said that one squire depicted oral sex. The Northern Ballet Theatre denied that its production of the Tchaikovsky classic was meant to shock but it did include a mock striptease.

Princess Margaret met the company backstage after Saturday's opening. Choreographer Dennis Wayne reported: "She said we were brave. She seemed to enjoy it." The mix of mild eroticism with classical ballet has helped Northern Ballet kick a recession in which the leisure industry has been floundering.

"Wherefore art thou Romeo?" — signed, Romeo

VERONA, Italy (R) — Homosexuals seeking advice for the loveless can now write to a gay Romeo or Juliet in the city where Shakespeare set the world's favourite love story. The free service will be started soon by the Verona branch of Italy's largest gay rights group. Promoters say it is an alternative to a service the city council already provides for heterosexuals who send letters addressed to Romeo and Juliet from around the world.

"We think there is a need to respond to every initiative that presumes that the whole world is heterosexual," Graziella Bertozzo, one of the promoters of the project, told Reuters Sunday.

Architect gives morgue new lease of life

BRUSSELS (R) — An architect who transformed a disused hospital morgue into his own house and office won an annual town planning prize in Liege Friday. The citation praised the originality of the scheme and said it showed how old buildings in the east Belgian city were gaining a new lease of life.

Man locked up wife every time he went out — for 50 years

LONDON (R) — A jealous husband who couldn't bear his wife talking to another man locked her in a coal shed every time he went out, subjecting her to a 50-year ordeal of domestic cruelty, police said. The couple's strange domestic secret only slipped out when the 74-year-old woman confided in a nurse after falling ill and being admitted to hospital. The woman, who was not named, had suffered in silence throughout their long marriage.

"She couldn't remember any time during her domestic life when she wasn't locked up, usually in the coal shed, when he went out," said police in Manchester, northern England. The wife seemed to think her experience was common, said Sarah Gathercole, a Domestic Violence Unit officer called in as counsellor on the case. The woman did not lodge any official complaint and still lives with her husband.

Need a job? Running a drug ring may help

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A former convict who ran a \$500-million marijuana ring has landed a sales job — with a resume touting his experience as a parolee. Bruce Perlowin, 41, paroled after spending nine years in prison for running the drug ring, says he received 200 inquiries after circulating a resume pointing to his management skills.

"We're hiring Bruce to help us expand," Steve Bogoff, chief operating officer of Mill Valley-based Rainforest Products Inc., a nationwide seller of imported cereals, said. The job pays \$25,000 a year. Mr. Perlowin's resume included quotes from news accounts of his exploits, including one that said: "He managed a fleet larger than most countries' navies... and a money-laundering ring that extended from Las Vegas (Nevada) casinos to banks in the Cayman Islands."

Mr. Perlowin's drug empire, before it was busted up by drug agents in 1983, brought an estimated \$500 million worth of marijuana from Colombia to the United States. Rainforest Products processes nuts purchased from indigenous peoples living in rainforests as a means of preventing destruction of the trees. Mr. Bogoff said Mr. Perlowin, now on holiday in Florida, starts his new job in March. "His heart is into doing something good for the world," said Mr. Bogoff.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

EC considers joint embassies

BRUSSELS (AP) — While cartographers scramble to redraw Europe's map, cash-strapped diplomats are pondering ways to avoid the burdensome costs of opening more than a dozen new embassies. In less than half a year, 17 new countries have been formally recognised in Europe — the 15 nations of the ex-Soviet Union and two former republics of Yugoslavia. "There are so many new countries in the world that we have to open some new embassies," sighed a Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesman. "The question is where and how?" Last week Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens said his country may have to consider closing one or more consulates in other countries to afford to open new ones in the former Soviet republics. Talks have already begun between Germany and France about a novel diplomatic solution for the 12-nation European Community trading bloc: Cut costs by sharing expenses. Especially in the more remote capitals, they argue, embassy drivers, translation services, even an embassy building can be shared.

Sri Lanka rebels dig in for battle

JAFFNA (R) — The battle lines are drawn in the northern Sri Lankan town of Jaffna, where rebels wait in trenches and bunkers for a government offensive. "If they want peace, we will negotiate. If they want war, we will fight," said Anton Balasingham, chief spokesman for the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "If there is an offensive, you can forget about peace talks in the future." In Colombo, the government and the military deny that they plan to take Jaffna, 320 kilometres away. But residents report extra troops and battle tanks moving north. The rebels, fighting for a separate state in the north and east for Sri Lanka's 2.6 million minority Tamils, control Jaffna peninsula and the town — their main stronghold.

10 killed in South African unrest

SOWETO, South Africa (R) — Ten people were killed in political unrest in South Africa at the weekend, including six shot and hacked to death in some of the worst fighting this year in Johannesburg's Soweto township, police said. The overnight clash in South Africa's largest township capped a week of rising tension between rival supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party and Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) across the country. Inkatha leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi said the two movements would continue fighting until they implemented among grassroots supporters a peace accord signed last September and the ANC disbanded its guerrilla wing — something Mandela refuses to do. "There is a desperate need for reconciliation at black grassroots level," Dr. Buthelezi said Saturday on a visit to the United States, the South African Press Association reported. As police removed the last of six bloodied bodies Sunday, rival groups exchanged angry taunts across a 30 metre no man's land on a battlefield of waste ground and burnt out buildings in Soweto's meadowlands district.

Former Stasi boss to go on trial

BERLIN (R) — Former Stasi security police boss Erich Mielke, east Germany's detested "master of fear," goes on trial Monday for two murders committed 60 years ago rather than for crimes perpetrated in the defunct Communist state. The controversial trial of the wheelchair-bound octogenarian who once ruled a vast empire of agents and informers will have few witnesses appearing. His defence lawyer says it will rely on documents drawn up by Nazi prosecutors in 1934. Mielke, 84, is accused of shooting two policemen dead in 1931 outside Communist Party headquarters in the last turbulent days of Germany's Weimar Republic. Justice authorities have also charged him with embezzlement and human rights abuses while Stasi chief in east Germany, where communism collapsed in 1989. Germany united a year later. The authorities are staging the murder trial first to deflect criticism that east Germany's old leaders are escaping justice through illness and legal complications.

'Poverty threatens new world order'

CARTAGENA, Colombia (R) — United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said Saturday the spread of poverty endangers global security and he called on all nations to assume responsibility for promoting Third World development. "There will be no peace and stability without development," Dr. Ghali said in a keynote speech to the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the Colombian Caribbean port of Cartagena. "Lasting development is an essential factor in the achievement of peace and stability in the world," the secretary-general said.

Romanians vote in local elections

BUCHAREST (AP) — Romanians voted Sunday in local elections that tested whether a united democratic opposition can unseat remaining Communist officeholders and boost its chances in upcoming general elections. Central Election Committee President Gheorghe Urgan said that turnout was high and that voting proceeded smoothly at 14,192 polling stations nationwide. In some counties, more than 20 per cent of the electorate had cast ballots within four hours of the polls opening at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT), he said.

More than 140,000 candidates were competing for 2,951 mayoral posts and nearly 40,000 city and county council slots in the first democratic local elections in more than 50 years.

President Ion Iliescu, predicted that the grip of the governing National Salvation Front would be weakened.

U.S. presidential campaign shifts fleetingly to Iowa

DES MOINES, Iowa (R) — The 1992 U.S. presidential election campaign shifts fleetingly Monday to Iowa where voters could give a boost to a native son seeking the Democratic nomination.

Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa made a strong showing in his home state to stay alive in the closely-watched New Hampshire primary on Feb. 18, the first in the country.

Sen. Harkin has been running third in opinion polls taken in New Hampshire. Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, beset by allegations of marital infidelity and avoiding the military draft, is the frontrunner in some polls. But in one survey he lost the lead Friday to former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas.

New Hampshire remains the early focus of the campaign because since 1952 no U.S. president has been elected without first winning that primary.

But Iowa, where citizens will gather Monday night in schools and homes to express their presidential preferences at local caucuses, has for the past two decades provided another early test of voter sentiment.

This year that test involves only Sen. Harkin.

Other Democrats have already surrendered Iowa to Sen. Harkin assuming his popularity will make him a sure winner. An exception is former California Governor Jerry Brown who made a brief foray into Iowa hoping to get some publicity with a second-place finish. Brown is running last in New Hampshire.

But Iowa is still a test for Sen.

Harkin. Aides to the liberal senator worry about a lukewarm showing that would tag Sen. Harkin as someone who could not even get the home folks angered.

Four years ago 120,000 Democrats turned out for the caucuses. This year, with no real contest, Sen. Harkin has to battle apathy. He has named some 2,500 precincts who have been told to find backers and hustle them to the meetings Monday night.

Sen. Harkin's Iowa campaign manager said the senator will have to make the best showing of any Democrat in the history of the quadrennial event to finish respectably. That means he would have to do better than former President Jimmy Carter, who grabbed 59 per cent of the vote in 1980.

Poll: Voters prefer Democrat over Bush

Meanwhile a U.S. News and World Report poll showed Saturday that voters would prefer electing a Democratic candidate to re-electing Mr. Bush as U.S. president in 1992.

Some 44 per cent of those polled said they would like to see an unspecified Democrat elected president, while only 39 per cent said they would like to see Mr. Bush re-elected.

The poll also found a strong anti-incumbent, anti-Congress feeling among voters, with 50 per cent saying Congress hurt their jobs and job prospects while only 20 per cent said it helped.

It showed that worry about

jobs and the overall health of the economy have climbed to the top of voters' concerns, overshadowing such campaign issues as a middle-class tax cut and health care reform.

Overall, concerns about the economy are benefitting Democrats most among moderate voters who in previous years voted Republican.

Weakened by a sick economy and a crisis of confidence in his leadership, President Bush officially launches his re-election campaign this week with his prospects heavily dependent on future events.

Analysts say that if the U.S. economy turns around or U.S. dies along, or if a major international crisis diverts attention from domestic woes, Mr. Bush is likely to win a second term comfortably.

But if economic conditions worsen — a development no-one expects — they say he could become the first elected one-term Republican president since Herbert Hoover, whose political career was wrecked by the great depression.

Mr. Bush, who has been openly running for re-election for months, will go through the formalities Wednesday by announcing his candidacy at a political rally in Washington.

He will later fly to New Hampshire, scene of the nation's first presidential primary on Feb. 18, to address the state legislature, talk to local officials and greet voters, many of whom have been hard hit by the recession.

Mr. Bush, facing an unexpectedly strong challenge in the

northeastern U.S. state of New Hampshire from Mr. Buchanan, is himself a victim of the economic downturn and inaccurate administration projections in early 1991 that it would be over by now.

A series of recent opinion polls showed his approval rating was in the mid-40 per cent range, less than half what it was under a year ago when he was the celebrated commander-in-chief of the U.S.-led military victory over Iraq in the Gulf War.

At the height of his post-Gulf War popularity, Mr. Bush once mused aloud: "I wonder how long it will last?" Now he seems hopeful that the economy will rebound, halting his political slide long before the Nov. 3 election.

Administration officials privately admit his modest economic rescue plan, which includes a proposed cut in the capital gains tax on investment profits that he has advocated since taking office, is largely designed to prevent critics from accusing him of an indifferent attitude toward domestic economic problems.

Last week, Mr. Bush sought to cover another domestic political flank with a health care proposal that calls for government subsidies to help Americans purchase private health insurance.

Soaring U.S. health care costs and the inaccessibility of health insurance for 37 million Americans have become a central issue in the 1992 presidential election campaign.

Mr. Bush was vague on how he would finance the \$100-billion plan. His administration made it clear it was his bid to participate

in a sizzling election-year debate over health care rather than a proposal that has a chance of passage soon.

Mr. Bush, a former U.N. ambassador, CIA director and envoy to China, and a veteran of numerous diplomatic missions as Ronald Reagan's vice-president, freely acknowledges that his strong suit is foreign policy.

The collapse of Soviet communism and the end of the cold war have worked to his disadvantage politically by making statesmanship a less important presidential attribute in the minds of many voters.

But unsettled world conditions stemming from the breakup of the Soviet Union could throw the spotlight back on Mr. Bush's main area of expertise.

Analysts say Mr. Bush's re-election chances are also boosted by a weak field of Democratic presidential contenders — five relatively unknown Democrats are competing for presidential nomination — and a Republican electoral vote advantage.

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan endorsed President George Bush for another term in office in a videotape played at a Saturday night dinner for conservative Republicans in New Hampshire.

The dinner was held in honour of Mr. Reagan on his 81st birthday.

"Although we now face some hard times, I believe that the experienced leadership of George Bush is our best hope to build a stronger America," Mr. Reagan said.